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”I’m not bad, but they don’t see it”

Perceptions on masculinity and gender equality, and challenges of marginalized urban adolescent men in Kenya

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

Focus on boys and men, especially as gendered subjects, has been missing in most of the mainstream development as well as in the Gender and Development (GAD) field, even if it is widely recognized that gender equality cannot be achieved without a focus on and an active involvement of boys and men in pursuing it. Where focus has been placed on boys and men in this field, attention has been drawn on masculinities, arguing that "masculinities matter" for gender equality and development. Evidence has been offered for instance of marginalized "masculinity-threatened" men resorting to "hyper-masculinity" to assert themselves as masculine in the face of poverty that precludes their role as the breadwinner – which is the cornerstone for masculine identity in Kenya as well as globally. In addition to that hypermascular behavior is claimed to exacerbate gender inequality and other development issues, it is a form of "toxic masculinity" that boys and men themselves also suffer from.

This study focuses on marginalized urban adolescent men explicitly as gendered beings in the context of Mukuru Kayaba slum in Nairobi. More precisely, this study aims to provide insights of the perceptions of these boys on masculinity and gender equality as well as of their lived realities as they strive to comply with the previous in the context of poverty, and challenge their way out of it. The hypothesis of marginalized urban men resorting to hypermasculinity to assert themselves as masculine serves as a backdrop of this study and a more nuanced understanding of this phenomenon is sought for in this study.

The research material of this study derived from interviews with 10 adolescent boys between the ages of 15 and 19. The study was guided by critical masculinity theory which is engaged with the social constructionist view of masculinity, and gender, as socially-produced and fluid dynamics that derive their meanings within specific social contexts. In addition to employing especially Connell's social theory on masculinity, postcolonial perspectives on masculinity and effects of current globalization are also attempted to be incorporated as the context where the boys live and construct their masculinity is all, historical, local and global at once.

Central findings of the study are that hypermascular attitudes, beliefs and actions were defined as the negation of "proper" masculinity in the official narratives of the boys. However, this kind of masculinity was claimed to be the most common one among boys in the slum. Adolescents did thus appear to be more prone to resort to hypermascular behaviors than adult men in the slums of Nairobi, which highlights how a fragile life situation adolescence is. The boys do not however comply to hypermasculine behavior necessarily to assure themselves as masculine *per se*, but either because of pure need, and/or because they are striving for hegemonic masculine ideals such as being able to provide for girls. Hypermasculinity might however also be a more hegemonic form of masculinity among the boys in the slum than the boys were willing to let be known. In any case, the boys felt stigmatized, criticized and dehumanized by people from outside of the slum, but they also took part in the same stigmatization: the social construction of slum boys as thieves – thus hypermascular. This, in turn, appeared to allow the police to use arbitrary and excessive power against them.

In conclusion, my material strongly supports the view that boys (and men) should be included in considerations and pursuits to advance gender equality. However, similarly as girls and women need better opportunities at many places, boys and men living in poverty also need opportunities. The easy way forward in GAD in addressing boys and men has been to consider the problematics of masculinities. The transformation that is required to bring about the opportunities needed by both genders however is a much bigger and more difficult issue, and something that would also bring the masculinities at the top of the global hierarchy of masculinities into question and scrutiny.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
Masculinity, Hypermasculinity, Gender, Gender Equality, Nairobi, Adolescence, Gender and Development

In memory of baby locks

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ABBREVIATIONS

CSM – Critical Studies of Men

CSW – The Commission on the Status of Women

CTUR – Centre for Time Use Research

GAD – Gender and Development

GM – Gender Mainstreaming

KSH – Kenyan Shilling

MDG – The Millennium Development Goals

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

PCI – Problem Centred Interview

PfA – Platform for Action

SDG – The Sustainable Development Goals

TENK – The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity

UN – The United Nations

WAD – Women and Development

WID – Women in Development

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1 INTRODUCTION

My interest in marginalized urban adolescent men as gendered subjects began from engaging with an organization called "The Cup" that distributes sustainable menstrual hygiene management tools, menstrual cups, for marginalized adolescent girls in the slums of Nairobi and in other parts of Kenya. In addition to providing girls with these cups, the organization conducts comprehensive education on sexuality and reproductive rights for both girls and boys. The boys' training also includes topics more specific to boys' situation, such as crime and drugs. Further, having read a master's thesis of Anna Malmi, a fellow Finnish student, written in the frame of the organization's work, on the challenges of adolescent girls living in Kibera slum in Nairobi and the life-strategies that they employ to deal with them, I strongly felt the need to shed light on the "other" subjects of these stories on harassment, transactional sex (in which some girls have to engage themselves in *inter alia* to get sanitary products – the issue that the organization is addressing), early, unwanted pregnancies and so on. As girls do not face these challenges in a vacuum, rather, boys and men were present in most of their stories, even if unspoken, I wanted to shift the explicit focus on them, on the part of the boys especially, as gendered beings.

Focus on boys and men especially as gendered subjects has been missing in most of the mainstream development as well as in the Gender and Development (GAD) field (Cleaver 2003; Cornwall 2000) (which further boosted my motivation for this inquiry). In the GAD field, where more emphasis has however started to be placed on boys and men, it is now also widely recognized that gender equality cannot be achieved without a focus on, and an active involvement of boys and men in pursuing it. Thus, attention has also been drawn on masculinities, arguing that "masculinities matter" for gender equality and thus for development (Cleaver 2003).

When masculinity has been addressed in development, as well as usually in the wider context, it has almost solely been represented as problematic. Evidence has been offered for instance of marginalized men needing to resort to bodily powers, such as violence and hypersexuality (Izugbara 2015b) in the face of poverty that precludes their role as breadwinner – which is the cornerstone for masculine identity in Kenya as well as globally – leading them to exhibit something that can be termed as "hypermasculinity"[1] (Izugbara 2015a). As violence and risky sexual behavior i.a. are features associated with hypermasculinity, looking from this angle it is not surprising that masculinity has most often received the negative connotation in the GAD literature as well.

Certain forms of masculinities, hypermasculinity particularly, have thus been seen as hindrances for development, and causing and accelerating gender inequality. Following the social constructivist theory of gender and masculinity, a key premise of a wide range of programs and campaigns in the GAD field is that men can change and are changing, and that as masculinity is socially constructed, it can be de- and reconstructed (Cornwall et al. 2011). In this way, engaging men in the project of gender equality has come to be about addressing the need to transform masculinity by changing cultural or social norms that guide men's detrimental behavior (ibid.).

In addition to that hypermascular behavior is claimed to exacerbate gender inequality and other development issues, such as AIDS in the field of health, it is viewed as "toxic masculinity" that boys and men themselves also suffer from. Dominant ideas of masculinity have social and emotional consequences for men, and if the ideas and ideals result in conditions and behaviors characterized by violence, "risk-taking", exposure to increased health risks, and lack of experiencing the full range of human emotions and so on, these consequences are harmful for boys and men themselves as well.

As there has been a neglect of boys and men as gendered subjects in the GAD field, there has as well been a gap in scholarly knowledge on marginalized urban men, both younger and older, in Africa in relation to masculinity (Izugbara 2015a). Even

[1] Encyclopaedia Britannica defines hypermasculinity as sociological term denoting exaggerated forms of masculinity, virility, and physicality. Three distinct characteristics associated with hypermasculinity are said to be: (1) the view of violence as manly, (2) the perception of danger as exciting and sensational, and (3) callous behavior toward women and a regard toward emotional displays as feminine.

though Kenya is still largely a rural country, only 26,5 % of the population reside in urban areas, there is an estimated 4,15 % annual rate of change of urbanization, meaning that urbanization is happening rapidly (CIA 2017). Roughly 60 percent of Kenya's urban households live in housing that would be defined as a "slum" under the Millennium Development Goals (Cira et al. 2016) and the share is expected to grow if current conditions persist as the demand for urban housing will continue to grow as Kenya urbanizes. Kenya's annual population growth rate is 2.6 % (World Bank 2016) and median age is 19.7 (CIA 2017). The Kenyan population is thus increasingly urban and young, as is the trend in Sub-Saharan Africa more generally also. Nairobi is the major city in Kenya as it hosts one third of Kenya's urban population, of which, as said, a majority reside in slum like conditions.

The characteristics of informal urban settlements ("slums") include poverty and unemployment, criminality, as well as poor infrastructure and exclusion from public and basic social services (Malmi 2016). It is against this backdrop and in this context, in the slum of Mukuru Kayaba in Nairobi more precisely, that this research seeks to gain insights of adolescent boys as explicitly gendered beings and their perceptions of themselves as gendered beings. The boys' perceptions on masculinity and gender relations that affect gender equality, and the lived realities affecting to these, as well as their own articulations of challenges that they face as boys living in the midst of poverty, will be studied. I will elaborate my research questions and the specific aims of this research in more detail as well as crystallize the statement of purpose of this research shortly, but next, I will consider the context of Mukuru Kayaba and adolescence.

1.1 Mukuru – and adolescence

More than half of the population of Nairobi (altogether around 4 million) inhabit only 5 % of the total residential land, giving them just about 1% of the total landmass of the city (Karanja and Makau 2006). Consequently, an estimated 100 different slum and squatter settlements exist in Nairobi (ibid.). Mukuru Kayaba is part of a belt of slums collectively called Mukuru that run along the length of Nairobi's industrial area situated in the East of Nairobi and cropped by three major roads and the Ngong river along which it stretches. The first settler arrived in Mukuru Kayaba in the early 1960's and the population grew gradually as people arrived looking for jobs

in the industrial area (ibid.). The population of the Mukuru slums is estimated to exceed 100,000, and Mukuru Kayaba (only "Mukuru" from now on) with an estimated population exceeding 40,000 (ibid., 81), is one of its largest sections. The land is around 20 acres (ibid.). The population is predominantly made up of tenants who pay rents of KSH 800 (around 6€) to 2,000 (around 16€) per month (ibid.). The characteristics of Mukuru go well together with those of informal urban settlements in general. Houses are mostly made of iron sheets except for a few more sturdy ones. Poverty, unemployment and criminality are omnipresent and it is an area prone to fire outbreaks, floods (given the proximity of the Ngong river and absence of a drainage system), drug abuse, and high infection rates of HIV/AIDS (Achieng 2016). The risks and challenges faced by adolescents living in informal settlements, such as Mukuru, include i.a. poverty, poor schooling outcomes and school drop-out, illiteracy, early marriage, unwanted pregnancies, high levels of HIV/AIDS infections, sexual and gender based violence, engagement in transactional sex, unsafe abortions and lack of access to basic services (Malmi 2016).

Adolescence is the prime time in which socialization occurs, but adolescents are also actively engaged in socialization (Randell et al. 2016) – it is the time in which one's ability to master their gender performance is starting to be measured, but adolescents also constantly evaluate behaviors and expressions in relation to normative conceptions of gender. According to Mead (1934), our knowledge about ourselves and the surrounding world is created and given meaning within interpersonal relationships. He thus underlined the importance of social interaction for human development, in other words, the internalization of the generalized attitudes and perspectives of significant others, and the behavior conditioned by social contexts (Randell et al. 2016). Given the interactional nature of meanings' construction, such as those ascribed to genders, gender norms too are socially constructed, contextually specific, cultural – albeit global similarities and patterns exist, and thus changeable.

This study explores boys' views on masculinity and gender relations, by which is meant construction of these norms, values, beliefs and perceptions that adolescent individuals have internalized (Randell et al. 2016) and construct in the specific social

context of Mukuru slum. Light is also shed on the specific challenges that the boys[2] express to face in this informal urban settlement, as they too are gendered.

1.2 Specific aims, research questions and statement of purpose

Aims

As said, this study attempts to provide insights of young men living in Mukuru explicitly as gendered beings. First, their perceptions on masculinity and gender relations are scrutinized, as these perceptions inform what are the types of masculinity or masculinities and gender relations that are constructed among these boys. Second, the perceptions are reflected with the lived realties of the boys whenever feasible as to gain an understanding of how social forces around – e.g. the perceptions of the society of these boys – affect them. Third, challenges and issues that the boys articulate to face in their everyday lives living in the slum are examined as these are an integral part of their gendered lives.

Research questions

A hypothesis, based on previous research conducted in other contexts, of marginalized urban men having to resort to hypermasculinity to assert themselves as masculine, operate as a backdrop of this study, as my aim is also to get a more nuanced view of this claim. Based on the aims outlined, my specific research questions that I hope to be able to offer insights on are thus:

> *Do marginalized urban adolescent men endorse attitudes and beliefs and/or do they restore to actions that can be considered hypermasculine to assert themselves as masculine?*

- *What are the boys' perceptions on "proper" masculinity?*
- *What are the boys' perceptions on gender equality?*
- *What kind of challenges and issues do the boys encounter in their everyday lives when trying to comply with the above in the context of poverty, and when challenging their way out of poverty?*

[2] "The boys" refer to my interviewees throughout this thesis.

Statement of purpose

It is important to study urban adolescent men as gendered beings for multiple reasons. First, it is central in the grand scheme of thing because of the general lack, in contrast to females, of scholarly knowledge on boys and men as gendered beings across disciplines. Second, addressing boys and men as gendered subjects is important in the GAD field, as it is recognized that gender equality cannot be achieved by focusing only on girls and women, but that it requires an active involvement of boys and men. Thus, researching males as gendered beings might be fruitful in informing how to get around to involve them in this project meaningfully. Third, as stated, not only does certain gendered expectations affect gender relations, better or worse, but they also can have social and emotional consequences affecting the well-being of boys and men (as well as of girls and women). Thus, making them visible is the first step in revising of what can be harmful. Lastly, I find it crucial to understand why and how exactly boys and/or men resort to hypermasculinity in these kinds of contexts and surroundings, if they do, in order to get a more nuanced understanding of the phenomena.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

Before outlining the theoretical and conceptual framework that is employed in this study, that of a social constructivist theory of gender and masculinity, I will have a quick review of what is stated about masculinity and development, and studied about masculinity in Kenya and Nairobi thus far, thus of the background literature of my investigation. This includes also considerations of gender inequality as a development issue. Before proceeding to present the actual findings of this study, the way they have been produced, thus the methodology, data and methods used, are introduced, so that the reader can better asses the findings. Indeed, the finding are presented in chapter 5 after which they are discussed in chapter 6 including considerations of the limitations of this study as well as suggestions of topics for further inquiry. Lastly, conclusions are drawn.

2 GENDER, MASCULINITY AND DEVELOPMENT – and masculinity in Kenya

In this chapter, I will first shortly recap what is the approach to gender of global development institutions such as the United Nations (UN), thus of the mainstream international development. Next, I will elaborate on how gender inequality is a "development issue". Then, I will look in more closely on why and how men have been acknowledged in the GAD field, how the "men-streaming" has come about and how men and masculinities are regarded to matter for development. After this placing of the study of men and masculinities to the international development arena, I will proceed in examining previous research of men and masculinities conducted in Kenya.

Gender equality has been a central policy issue in the field of international development for the past four decades (Wanner and Wadham 2015). Gender equality and women's empowerment also became an international development goal in their own right as one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000[3]. The contemporary approach to gender equality in the field of international development is that of "gender and development" (GAD)[4] in which the emphasis is on gender relations between women and men, and women's empowerment (ibid.).

Adopting gender equality in the international development agenda in the form of the kind of rights and capabilities that feminists would seek for has and continues however to face resistance by an opposing "unholy alliance" (Kabeer 2015b). This religious based alliance is led by the Vatican and supported by some Islamic states and a neoconservative Christian lobby with fluctuating support from the US and other governments (ibid.). According to Kabeer (2015b), this resistance has narrowed down feminist efforts in the UN processes to a focus on sexual and reproductive rights thus causing a relative neglect of e.g. the gendered economic injustices associated with the dominant market led model of development. More importantly, calls for high-profile international conferences on gender-related issues to drive them further are

[3] For the gender politics of the processes that led to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals and which continues to feature in subsequent policy debates, see Kabeer (2015b).
[4] For the evolution of the approach to gender in international development policy from Women in Development (WID) to Women and Development (WAD) to Gender and Development (GAD), see e.g. Razavi and Miller (1995).

considered risky as they might reopen negotiations on already established agreements on women's rights. The annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) have thus come to be the forum in which "geopolitics combines with gender politics in charged confrontations between feminist organizations and the shifting countries and groups that make up the unholy alliance from year to year" (ibid., 386). Thus, even though advancing gender equality has globally come to be a central policy issue in its own right, feminist efforts are still being narrowed down and facing opposition.

Before proceeding to look in more closely on why and how men have been acknowledged in the GAD field, I will take a moment to elaborate on how gender inequality is a "development issue". This also highlights, perhaps, how the narrow emphasis of the UN processes limited mainly on sexual and reproductive arena to advance gender equality is gravely insufficient.

2.1 Gender inequality as development issue

Gender inequalities, to the disadvantage of girls and women, are evident in many development related issues, such as poverty (Kabeer 2015a). It is also argued that gender equality will create development, and that gender inequality is a serious obstacle to sustainable poverty reduction and socioeconomic development (Silberschmidt 2011). However, it is also worth considering that poverty and lack of socio-economic development are obstacles to gender equality (ibid.), which creates a kind of egg or chicken situation between socio-economic development and enhancing gender equality.

Nevertheless, following Stewart (2002), inequality deriving from discrimination based on marginalized social identities, such as the female gender in patriarchy, is addressed as "horizontal inequality" (ibid., 190). Thus whereas "vertical inequalities" rank individuals/households by their place in an income/wealth hierarchy, thus drawing attention to class-based inequalities, horizontal inequalities refer to inequalities between socially defined groups. Gender inequality is a horizontal inequality in itself, but it is also said to cut across both vertical and other horizontal inequalities, such as race and age. According to Kabeer (2015a, 190), this intersection of gender with the other forms of inequality means that it is girls and women (girls especially)

from the poorest ethnic group or race, etc. that have the poorest levels of e.g. health, nutrition, and education. In addition, they are the ones to often suffer higher levels of gender based violence than other girls and women (ibid.).

Gender is thus one of many inequalities that generate poverty and exclusion. It is not however "just another inequality", but a central and defining one in that it is worth of concentrating on by itself for the following reasons argued by Kabeer (2015a, 202-3). First, gender inequality is the most pervasive form of inequality across societies, even though its forms can change in different societies. Second, gender inequality is also pervasive across different groups within societies, cutting across other forms of inequality. Also, it intersects with other inequalities in ways that *intensify* the disadvantages associated with other forms of inequality, thus not being just another "variable" among others. Third, as gender inequality is structured into the organization of social relations of a society, and women's position is usually at the intersection of production and reproduction, the organization of gender relations is central to the nexus between economic growth and human development. Consequently, it is easy to join Kabeer's claim that understanding the causes and consequences of gender inequality is of concern to all societies in the world, both rich and poor (ibid., 202). That said, gender inequality is a "development issue", but not only for "developing countries", but for all societies, where gender inequalities exist.

Further, even though it is the female gender that is the "marginalized social identity" in the current patriarchal societies, as gender inequality is structured in the organization of gender relations it is not sufficient to focus only on one party of these relations. In other words, women's well-being cannot improve without addressing men, because gender is relational (Silberschmidt 2011). This has also been acknowledged in international development with a result of an attempt to "men-stream" GAD.

2.2 Men-streaming of GAD

As stated, gender equality is a central policy issue in the field of development[5]. With the shift from WID (women in development) and WAD (women and development)

[5] In the current global development framework of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), "Gender Equality" is number 5.

to GAD (gender and development), men – alongside of women, entered into the development discussions (Parpart 2015)[6]. This meant also that the socially constructed attitudes and practices associated with men and women, their impact on gender relations, and the gendered distribution of power and influence were acknowledged with more weight than before. The limitations of the previous "women's programs" with their focus solely on women had started to become more apparent in the late 1980s, and the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women, at the latest, placed men also clearly on the development agenda in regards to gender equality (ibid.). The Platform for Action (PfA) resulting from this conference stressed that gender equality can only be achieved if men are also participating in achieving it (Wanner and Wadham 2015). As a result of this conference, gender mainstreaming (GM)[7] was introduced as the primary mechanism for achieving gender equality (Parpart 2015).

The role of men in gender equality as intended in the Beijing Declaration and PfA has however generally been neglected in international and national GM approaches (Wanner and Wadham 2015). Rather, men have often been viewed as impediments to gender equality and women's empowerment (ibid.; Parpart 2015). According to Wanner and Wadham (2015) reasons stated as to why men have been neglected include lack of acknowledgement and understanding regarding men as gendered beings, and worries about "male-hijacking" of the gender agenda possibly with a fear of redistribution of limited funds from women's projects to men.

A shift towards the inclusion of men and masculinities in gender equality efforts *as part of the solution,* despite their dominant position in current gender relations, has however also gained some momentum in this millennium (Wanner and Wadham 2015). One of the buttressing statements for the inclusion of boys and men in a more positive light is that as in the current gender order it is men who control most of the resources required to implement women's claims for justice, men can be seen as "gatekeepers" for gender equality (Connell 2005c, 1802). This claim is based on the assessment that in addition to change in everyday life and personal conducts, moving toward a gender-equal society involves profound institutional changes. Hence the very gender inequalities in economic assets, political power, and cultural authority,

[6] For an analysis of the progress of men-streaming of GAD, see Wanner and Wadham (2015).
[7] Meaning gender assessments of legislation, policies and programs in all areas and at all levels.

as well as the means of coercion, that gender reforms intend to change, currently mean that men (often specific groups of men) control most of the resources required to implement these reforms (ibid., 1802). There thus needs to be a specific focus on these "gatekeepers" as well.

What has also supported and pushed the "men-streaming" more significantly, I would assume, has been the realization that not only can men contribute significantly to achieving gender equality (or even being the gatekeepers for it), but they themselves can also benefit substantially from it. In reverse, gender inequality, or rather gender relations based on certain gendered assumptions, harms also men, albeit differently than women. Thus, even though men enjoy the "patriarchal dividend", which means the advantage for men in general from the overall subordination of women in patriarchy (Connell 2005a), in general, they also suffer from socially constructed dominant ideas of masculinities and gender stereotypes (Wanner and Wadham 2015). The UN states that "an unequal gender order (…) and dominant ideas of masculinity have social and emotional costs *for men* [italics added], as they can result in conditions and behaviors characterized by violence, "risk-taking", exposure to increased health risks, and lack of experiencing the full range of human emotions" (UN DAW 2008, 5; UNESCO, 2004 according to Wanner and Wadham 2015, 18). These costs can in addition deepen gender inequality in a form of gender based violence for instance. In this sense, masculinities do "matter" for development.

These issues highlight that men are gendered beings and are affected by the unequal power relations between men and women, and among themselves. Men should thus also be considered as such, *men*, in international development policy about gender and development (Wanner and Wadham 2015). It is important however not to conflate the call for "men-streaming" of GAD with the neglect of women, who nonetheless are the ones in the receiving end of gender *in*equality as stated earlier. Acknowledging, then however, that it is problematic if gender equality is thought predominantly as a women's issue, does not mean that priority should not be given to advancing women's position given the current male dominance of gender relations. However, in international development organizations gender equality continues to be thought of as predominantly a women's issue (ibid.) perhaps based partly on these concerns.

It is argued that any inclusion of men to gender work should start with a deconstruction of the concept of "masculinity", as an understanding of how masculinity and femininity are socially constructed and reproduced is of critical importance for achieving gender equality (Wanner and Wadham 2015). Indeed, my study aims to contribute to deconstructing the understanding and construction of masculinity among a certain group of men in Kenya in this pursuit. Next however, I will have a look at the current state of this inquiry in the Kenyan context.

2.3 Previous research on masculinity in Kenya and Nairobi

There are gaps in scholarly knowledge on marginalized urban men in Africa in relation to masculinity (Izugbara 2015a). The work on masculinities in the continent has been most burgeoning in South-Africa since the late 1990s with authors such as Ratele, Morrell and Shefer. Similarly to the entire continent, where men have mostly been acknowledged in sexual and reproductive health issues, much of the research in South-Africa has been inspired by the imperatives of challenging the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS (Ratele 2014, 33). In the context of Eastern Africa, there is research on men and masculinities from rural and urban contexts conducted e.g. by Silberschmidt for more than 25 years (Silberschmidt 2011). She has found that in this context work and access to income generating activities give men social value and self-esteem. No work, or money, result thus in lack of social value and self-esteem, and lack of opportunities in relationship formations with women, leading to male sexuality, potency and control over women to become central for masculinity (ibid., 100). Izugbara (2015a) has addressed this scholarly gap in the Kenyan context further by specifically focusing on the construction of masculinity among poor men in the slums of Nairobi.

Other research on the social construction of masculinity in Kenya has mainly been existing in the form of analysis of media and literary representations of manliness as well as social science and historical investigations of "tribal" masculinities, and the impact of social change on masculinities and gender norms (Izugbara 2015a, 20). According to Izugbara (2015a), this previous research in Kenya has ignored the processes whereby local and national contexts of poverty and men's everyday socio-economic life, in combination with wider globalized processes, influence notions, idiosyncrasies, understandings, and practices of manliness as well as men's gendered

views of themselves and perceptions of their place and roles. Izugbara has thus aimed to understand masculinity as a socially constructed dynamic in the slums of Nairobi. As my research shares this aim, albeit among adolescent boys and men, I will next briefly present his central findings for a later reflection of my own.

In Kenya, as is the norm globally as well, masculinity is closely tied with breadwinnerhood (Izugbara 2015a). However, the artefacts of this prized masculinity are increasingly difficult to achieve and attain among poor marginalized urban men given the context of poverty (ibid.). Hossain calls the phenomena in which poor men are in thrall to patriarchal ways of thinking even when they have least to gain from them as "poor man's patriarchy" (Gaag 2014, 126). The majority of men (men on low and precarious incomes) enjoy relatively limited privileges of a patriarchal system, or at least considerably fewer such privileges than they relatively recently did, and while the privileges of men today seem somewhat fewer, the burdens appear greater (ibid.). This means that there is a poor man's patriarchy in a double sense: a set of rules about male rights and responsibilities govern the lives of men living in or near poverty, but both the rights and the responsibilities are weakly adhered to in a watery version of a masculinity that revolve around the idea of the male breadwinner or provider (ibid.)

In the literature, it has been claimed that poor marginalized men tend to gravitate towards compensatory and violent masculinities, such as hypermasculinity, to deal with their sense of masculine insufficiency when failing or experiencing difficulties to be the breadwinner (Izugbara 2015a). Izugbara has precisely sought to understand the ways men living in Kenyan slums deal with their masculinity when facing the hardship of poverty and the dilemma it creates to their masculinity – in other words, how the "masculine challenged" men construct their masculinity in the slums of Nairobi.

Izugbara found very little evidence that all "masculine challenged" men would resort to compensatory hypermasculinity to deal with a sense of masculine insufficiency. While compensatory hypermasculine practices were evident in violent and other extreme acts of the men he studied, he also found that several men dealt with a sense of masculine insufficiency by redefining the meaning of being a man and even taking on nontraditional roles.

Izugbara's study pinpoints, however, that poverty did not exempt the poor men from expectations of diligence in provisioning and breadwinning. Rather, "it [poverty] was constituted as both a challenge to masculine identity and a promoter of true manliness, defined mainly in terms of persistent pursuit of providerhood in the face of poverty" (Izugbara 2015a, 53). Further, masculinities are claimed to be many in the social structural view on masculinity. While Izugbara's evidence points to the hegemony of breadwinner masculinity in the slums of Nairobi, he shows evidence that there are also different discourses of masculinity as well as contending communities of men operating in them.

However, breadwinnerhood, as the hegemonic form of masculinity, was tenaciously pursued even in the face of its unfeasibility. "Being a breadwinner which then qualifies one to be the head of the household and hence to be able to make a claim in masculinity is sought by any means necessary by poor men in the slums of Nairobi" (Izugbara 2015a, 53). Poor men in the slums of Nairobi are thus active participants in the global patriarchal discourse that frames manhood in terms of breadwinnerhood and providerhood (ibid.).

Breadwinnerhood, the status that marks manliness, was pursued in a variety of ways, and as stated, by *any* means possible: by socially sanctioned means as well as strategies that, in their contexts, were considered absolutely unmasculine. These strategies allowed the men flexibility in the way they pursued breadwinnerhood. Consequently, the "unmasculine" practices, such as selling sex to fellow men, "assume new meanings as men seek to assert themselves as men" (Izugbara 2015a, 53).

The strong forces against changes in masculinity also become apparent in Izugabara's study. In addition to that men enjoy several social and economic privileges by asserting themselves in particular masculine forms (Connell 2011), they also saw masculinity as universal and natural (Izugbara 2015a).

Izugbara calls for further understanding of the ways poor urban marginalized men articulate and understand the issues that they face in their everyday life, as making men allies in the struggle for gender equality requires them to comprehend the beliefs and social forces that motivate their everyday behaviors (Izugbara 2015a, 54). This is a call I also wish to answer with my work on marginalized urban adolescent boys.

3 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The aim of this thesis is to investigate what kind of masculinity do the marginalized, masculinity-challenged urban adolescent boys in Mukuru construct. This is done by examining their perceptions on masculinity and gender relations. Also, the challenges faced by the boys are reviewed to see how they are intertwined, or if they are, with their perceptions on masculinity. This investigation informs if these boys assert themselves through overtly masculine actions ("hypermasculinity") as we could hypothetically expect based on previous research. The theoretical underpinnings of this investigation are grounded in the social constructionist theory of gender and masculinity, and the critical men's studies deriving from it. As the context and place in which the boys live in, is all, postcolonial, local and global, postcolonial perspectives on masculinity and globalization's effects will also be examined. The theoretical position of critical men's studies serves as the normative theoretical framework of the study. In a more concrete level, the study leans especially on Raewyn Connell's social theory of masculinity. In this chapter I will present the aforementioned theories and their central concepts to the reader as well as engage myself in the theoretical discussions in which they are involved in. The aim of this chapter is to scope out what the meaning of *masculinity* in this study is and how it is seen to be operating according to the study.

3.1 Social constructionist theory of gender and masculinity

The theory underlying critical men's studies, the theoretical framework employed in this study, as well as the whole GAD approach[8] is that of the social constructionist theory of gender and masculinity. What is meant by "social construction" in this study follows Berger and Luckmann (1966) in that the world of everyday life is taken for granted as reality by the members of a society in the subjectively meaningful conduct of their lives, but it is also a world that originates in their thoughts and actions, and is maintained as real by these (ibid., 33). Thus, the objective is to study what is real and reality for certain subjects, and what is real and reality for them, is,

[8] As said, the GAD field is committed to the view that gender is socially constructed and the metamorphosis of the field from WID to GAD is an indication of this commitment.

as said, socially constructed in their thoughts and actions (which, of course, are intertwined). As the view of gender being socially constructed, meaning that the meanings ascribed to different genders construct and are maintained or changed in the thoughts and actions of people, is already so widely accepted in both praxis and academia relating to GAD, I will go through the main principle of the theory *vis-à-vis* the opposing theories only very briefly here.

Central principle in the social constructionist theories of gender and masculinity is that biology, or something "natural", is not viewed to determine the different attributes ascribed to different genders. The view that would support the idea that biology or sex (the genitals of people *per se*) would determine something, or anything, social, such as masculinity, is called biological determinism or essentialism. Research drawing from these perspectives suffer serious flaws. Most crucially, they cannot account for the varying notions and practices of masculinity between men, cultures and societies in the now and in the past (Izugbara 2015a).

Another popular, but lacking, perspective to gender and masculinity has been the socialization or sex role perspective. While recognizing the social roots of masculinity, research adopting this view depicts gender and masculinity as the outcomes of a passive process of socialization, in so doing losing the agency of people from sight and reducing them to passive by watchers and objects. According to Izugbara (2015a, 14), other criticism given to socialization and sex role theories include the following: they reinforce biological determinism as men are seen essentially different from women and thus are socialized differently; they use sex differences as the basic explanatory factor in behavior, and cannot explain dynamism in social meanings and performances of gender and masculinity; they conflate gender with sex differences; they cannot account for different masculinities; and they fixate gender dualism.

The view of gender and masculinity as socially-constructed phenomena emerged precisely in response to the limitations of biological determinism or essentialism and the socialization or sex role perspectives of masculinity in particular and gender in general (Izugbara 2015a). The thesis that gender and masculinity are not fixed properties is the core of the social constructionist perspectives, but research can concentrate on different aspects of their construction. Where some scholars concentrate for example on the discursive construction, others can emphasize the different resources that boys

and men have for "doing" their gender and masculinity, and so on and so forth. In this study, the inquiry is primarily in finding out what is expressed as real and reality concerning masculinity by the adolescent boys in Mukuru.

3.2 Critical men's studies - *profeminist* research on boys and men

Critical men's studies is a theoretical current that indicates an understanding of men (or gender) and masculinity as socially produced and constructed. To study boys and men critically means first of all to make them visible and known as *gendered* people. Throughout the history of Western[9] social science, men have indeed been at the center of research, but as generic human beings whose gender went either unnoticed and untheorized, or at least undertheorized (Brod and Kaufman 1994). The claimed (i.a. gender) neutrality of Western science is indeed one of the key critics of feminist thought. The field of gender studies, on the other hand, has traditionally been addressing questions almost solely about girls and women, as the impulse to develop the field came mainly from the kind of feminist thought that covers issues concentrating on them (Connell et al. 2005). Critical men's studies thus scrutinize boys and men as as much gendered subjects as women and girls are considered to be. Furthermore, in critical men's studies it is argued that gender matters and makes a difference for boys and men as much as it matters and makes a difference to be, or to be regarded as, a girl, a women, or simply by being a human being, regardless if identifying oneself in either one of the bins of this binary category – even though the effects of gender are different. Gender makes a difference for everyone because it is a way in which social practice is ordered (Connell 2005a). Gender is being used to define everyone's "proper" place on a yardstick against which we are then measured. Boys, men and masculinity are as much omnipresent on this yardstick[10] as are girls, women and femininity, and what is considered of the male gender has an enormous effect to the way in which social practice is ordered. It can thus safely said to be about time that the male *gender* is also brought under scrutiny.

[9] North and West are used in this study interchangeably to refer to the culturally, politically and economically dominant countries and areas of the world such as the USA and Europe.

[10] What is missing from it is also highly important to note – social practice is still ordered by the male/female binary division.

In addition to the "naming men as men" approach – and this is crucial – critical men's studies engage themselves in the feminist trajectory of gender emancipation, meaning that it addresses and aims to deconstruct the unequal power structures constructed on and around genders. There are, and have been, plenty of literature about boys and men as boys and men, but *without* the fundamental feminist insight that gender is a system of power that needs to be changed in patriarchy or any other unequal setting. These kinds of writings on and about boys and men have helped men to develop their sensitivities for instance, but usually with the cost of arguing for timeless natural differences between men and women (Coltrane 1994), thus turning out to be rather *anti*feminists. Exactly through this engagement to the feminist purpose of deconstructing unequal power structures attached to and built upon genders, critical men's studies are in dialogue and in *alliance* with feminist theory. Critical men's studies is profeminist research on boys and men and should thus firmly be distinguished from the kind of men's movements and writings that argue for example for restoring "traditional" patriarchal values of manhood, characterized e.g. as "mythopoetic men's movements". Despite the varying motivations for engaging with men's gender, there does appear to be some consensus that there is a problematic that has to do with being male (Ratele 2008) both between these kinds of movements and critical men's studies as well.

Looking from some feminist points of views, drawing attention to boys and men does however also experience at least two types of concerns. First, there is a concern that a focus on men replicates patriarchal biases by bringing more attention to the already dominant gender, drawing attention, and possibly resources, away from girls, women, or other genders. Second, bringing attention to men's *gender* conflicts with the feminist degendering movement that wishes to "undo gender" as an organizing principle *per se*[11]. A counter-question to address the concern of the feminist undoing gender in regards to boys and men is that how to undo something that is barely visible or known? Further, when placing men and their institutions at the heart of analysis, the key not to replicate the patriarchal biases lays in how one theorizes men and masculinities (Coltrane 1994). In other words, it is argued to be possible to avoid the risks of replicating patriarchal biases. Indeed, fighting patriarchy, for betterment for

[11] More on the relationship between masculinity studies and feminist theory on e.g. Gardiner (2002).

all genders, is at the core of critical men's studies and the entitlement for its existence within the feminist frame.

As stated above, critical men's studies, or "Critical Studies of Men" (CSM)[12] addresses men *critically* in the context of *gendered power relations* (Hearn 2004) *albeit* it might bring awareness to the contradictory experiences of power within the male gender category as well. Critical men's studies with its affiliation to feminist theory serves as the normative frameworks of this study. Next, I will present a theory that will serve me on a more concrete level in my attempt to analyze masculinity of adolescent boys in Mukuru.

3.3 Connell's theory of masculinities

The Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell's theory of masculinity has been the most influential theory in the field of men and masculinities (Wedgwood 2009). It can thus be considered as *the* theory of masculinity. The first edition of Connell's book "*Masculinities*" was published in 1995, at the era when the critical men's studies started to develop its own distinctive perspectives (ibid.) and it has been gaining reputation ever since.

The social constructionist base of Connell's theory can already be read by the name of her book: masculinit*ies* (plural). According to Connell (2005a), there is not one masculinity – as would be suggested following an essentialist path in regards to masculinity – nor just one masculinity *per* context either, – as perhaps would be the case looking through socialization/sex role perspectives. Rather, according to her, there are multiple masculinities, which, in turn, are in different hierarchical relations to each other. For Connell thus, gender politics resides within masculinity just as much as between different genders.

As I am mainly applying Connell's theory of masculinity in this study, I will next present her understandings of the main concept revolving around masculinity, gender that is, as well as the concept of masculinity itself. The aim of this chapter is also to

[12] Critical men's studies, masculinity studies and CSM (term used at least by Hearn (2004)) are used interchangeably in this study.

explain to the reader how the construction of multiple masculinities and the dynamics between them is viewed through Connell's theory.

3.3.1 Gender (and sex)

Gender

The analysis of gender that underpins Connell's theory of masculinity, is that gender is a way in which social practice is ordered. She sees that the everyday conduct of life is organized in relation to a "reproductive arena" (NB. not a "biological base"):

> "Gender is social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do, it is not social practice reduced to the body. (…) Gender exists precisely to the extent that biology does *not* [italics in the original] determine the social" (Connell 2005a, 71).

According to her, gender is thus a historical process evolved and evolving over time involving the body, not a fixed set of biological determinants. Gender relations, then, are relations among people organized through the reproductive arena, and the link between them is purely social: "(t)he gender structuring of practice need have nothing biologically to do with reproduction. The link with the reproductive arena is social" (Connell 2005a, 73). Gender relations form one of the major structures of all documented societies and is found however we "slice" the social world, from an individual to global processes (ibid., 72).

Gender is also internally complex structure, where many different logics are simultaneously superimposed. Connell (2002) provides a model distinguishing four main substructures in the modern system of gender relations. These are (Connell 2002; 2005a.):

- *Power relations*. The main axis of power in current gender order is the overall subordination of women and dominance of men – "*patriarchy*".
- *Production relations*. Gender divisions of labor, its economic consequences, and the gendered character of capital.
- *Emotional relations.* Patterns of emotional attachment, such as sexuality, marriage and emotional labor.

- *Symbolic relations.* The meanings of genders and gender relations, and their representations.

Sex

The division between sex and gender has usually been seen as that the former indicates the biological condition, the genitalia of people, while the former indicates the "social sphere" of the sex. My purpose here is not to delve in very deep to the discussion taking place in theories and definitions on gender such as the relationship between sex and gender. However, for my purpose, it is worth to present Connell's view of the relationship between bodies (the "biological base") and gender.

Connell does not support *per se* the widely accepted view that both biology and social influence combine to produce gender. Rather, she talks about body-reflexive practices. The break off from biological determinism has been a huge success of feminist theory. However, Connell argues that bodies still matter in their own right. As we could see from her definition of gender, bodies are objects of practice, but they are also *agents* of practice, she argues, and that practice itself forms the structure within which bodies are appropriated and defined (Connell 2005a, 61). This pattern is what she calls a body reflexive practice. According to Connell, the bodies' reflexivity and agency is something that the usual sex/gender division does not quite grasp.

3.3.2 Masculinity

The concept of "masculinity" is a cornerstone in this study as I attempt to understand how a certain group of men understand masculinity and what being a "man" means for them. Within critical men's studies there is a widespread understanding that there exists no universal or fundamental form of masculinity, but that masculinity is ambiguous and fluid. As such, it is not a coherent object about which a generalizing science can be produced. However, when looking at masculinity as an aspect of a larger structure where it is located in, we can have coherent knowledge about some aspects of it (Connell 2005a).

Connell (2005a) offers a framework that provides a way of distinguishing types of masculinity and of understanding their dynamics. As we can only understand masculinity through the process and relationships through which people conduct gendered lives, first of all, it is worth noticing that masculinity does not exist except in contrast with femininity. As stated, gender relations is one of the major structures in a society. So, according to Connell: "(P)ractice that relates to this structure [gender relations] (…) does not consist of isolated acts. Actions are configured in larger units, and when we speak of masculinity and femininity, we are naming configurations of gender practice" (2005a, 72). Masculinity and femininity are thus *gender projects*: "processes of configuring practice through time, which transform their starting-points in gender structures" (ibid., 72). Masculinity is thus:

> "(S)imultaneously a place in gender relations, the practice through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (Connell 2005a, 71).

Because gender is a way of structuring social practice *in general*, it is also involved with other social structures. Connell's theory of masculinity takes thus into account the way in which gender intersects, even though she suggests (2005a, 75) that a better term for the broadly accepted "intersecting" of gender would be that it "interacts", with other social structures such as class and race. In other words, her theory of masculinity is intersectional. And this interaction with other structures produces the multiplicity of masculinities. Likewise, as other structures affect gender, gender also operates within the other structures.

Perhaps the most famous and applied[13] notion of Connell's theory is the concept of *hegemonic masculinity*:

> "(M)asculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable" (Connell 2005a, 76).

It is "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the *currently accepted* answers to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy" (Connell 2005a, 77). With her

[13] Though not un-criticized: for a differing view of hegemonic masculinity see e.g. Demetriou (2001).

typology of different types of masculinities, Connell thus explores the power relation between men as well as between men and women.

In addition to hegemonic, she distinguishes subordinated, complicit and marginalized masculinities. Whereas hegemony, subordination and complicity are relations *internal* to gender order, the interplay of gender with other structures creates further relationships between masculinities, such as marginalization. Marginalization in turn, is also always relative to the authorization of the hegemonic form of masculinity of the dominant group. The relation of marginalization and authorization may thus also exist between subordinated masculinities (Connell 2005a, 81). The relations between hegemony and domination / subordination and complicity on one hand, and marginalization / authorization on the other, form Connell's framework for analyzing specific masculinities. A focus on the gender relations among men in this way is necessary to keep analysis dynamic and avoiding collapsing into a character typology of different types of masculinities.

Choosing to use critical men's studies as my approach in studying adolescent masculinity in Mukuru is a normative choice based on it being *profeminist* research on boys and men. My purpose in investigating the social construction of masculinity among adolescent boys in Mukuru is to contribute to the feminist trajectory of gender emancipation in which unequal power structures constructed on and around genders are aimed to be deconstructed. I am interested in the boys' perceptions on masculinity and gender relations in this pursuit, and because masculinity is a configuration of practice relating to gender relations, I see that it is useful to examine perceptions of both of them (masculinity and gender relations). As the context and place in which the boys live in, is all, postcolonial, local and global, I will proceed next to consider specific deliberations concerning the historicity of postcolonial masculinities, and the wider current context in which local masculinities form.

3.4 Postcolonialism and globalization

Specific masculinities form at particular times and places, contexts, if you will. But as stated above, along with gender relations which form them, masculinities are historical. "To understand the current pattern of masculinities we need to look back over the period in which it came into being" (Connell 2005a, 185). At the same time, on top of understanding the historicity of the local context and its current state where it has led to, in the current globalized world, globalization with its effects is also present locally. The globalization of gender must thus also be considered.

In this chapter I will first explore postcolonial perspectives on masculinity, and how Connell's theory resonates with them. Applying a Northern theory to examine postcolonial masculinities is also discussed at the metalevel here. After considering the postcolonial perspectives, I will examine global dimensions of masculinity. These considerations are necessary as the context where the boys live and construct their masculinity is all, historical, local and global *at once*.

3.4.1 Postcolonial perspectives on masculinity

Critical men's studies formed in the domain of Anglophone social science of the North, stressing questions relevant to the surrounding late capitalist societies, and were up until some ten years ago a non-existent scholar in the African continent (Ratele 2008). Is applying a theoretical framework produced in the North to explain phenomenon there applicable in the South and – more importantly, is doing so yet another form of colonialism, that of knowledge? Connell (2014) herself responses to this critique by making an appeal for a "world-centred", rather than metropole-centered, domain of knowledge. The need to consider the formation of masculinities on a historical terrain, including worldwide processes of conquest and social disruption, such as colonialism and globalization, is also brought forward in her theory.

Next, I will explore some postcolonial perspectives on masculinity and how a theory of masculinity deriving from critical men's studies can respond or resonates to those perspectives. However, when applying Connell's theory produced in the North in analyzing boys in Kenya, I am aware of the meta-theoretical issue intrinsic of postcolonial theory concerning the always-vexed relationship of any Northern discourse to

Southern experiences it seeks to represent (Stanovsky 2007). I will use the postcolonial perspectives, and criticism, presented here, rather than opposing, as supplementing and in combination with Connell's theory to enrich my analysis.

Race

Colonialism, and decolonization, produced enormous social disruptions, altering the colonized societies completely, and laid the foundations of the postcolonial societies of today. Colonialism also affected the colonizing societies, and the world order, of which the wealth inequality of today for example bears its mark. With colonialism also came slave trade that, at the latest and in a most brutal way, produced an equation of *black*[14] with *inferiority* (Morrell and Swart 2005). The African men were marginalized and subordinated to the extent that their entire humanity or manhood were questioned (Uchendu 2008). Colonialism not only altered the colonies and their subjects, but "imperialism and the invention of race were (also) fundamental aspects of Western, industrial modernity" (McClintock 1995, 5) and its subjects. It is not to be dismissed thus that the "black" and "white" masculinities and men of the colonial era had a reciprocal influence on each other in the formation of their respective gendered identities (Stanovsky 2007).

Today, race keeps intersecting with gender with the backdrop of this equation of the marginalization and subordination of other than white men. As stated, Connell's theory is intersectional, thus it takes race into account as an intersecting structure with gender.

Heterogeneity and agency

Colonial subjects have been "othered" (Said 1978), essentialized and represented in contrast with Northern norms and ideals resulting in representations of "native" men such as dangerously hypersexual beasts (Stanovsky 2007). Representing "other" men as such has a political impetus for example in legitimatizing use of force against them. This can be seen for instance in military operations of the West to "free the

[14] I use this term not because I would want to endorse it or identify with it, but because it is broadly used in the literature referring to dark skinned people.

others' women", as well as in opposing immigration of "such men" in the West. Essentializing and homogenizing of postcolonial masculinity obscure the actual diversity and plurality of lived postcolonial masculinities around the globe (ibid.). Postcolonial thought thus strongly opposes essentialism and homogenization of postcolonial masculinities even if the *shared* experience of postcolonial societies and its people with the imperialist, or neocolonial, West is at the basis of the theory. The heterogeneity of masculinities within a similar context is of key in Connell's theory.

Postcolonial theory also brings focus to the colonial and postcolonial subjects' agency – something that has been neglected under the essentializing "Western gaze", insisting that everyone has agency (Morrell and Swart 2005). A theory that is based on social constructionism, such as Connell's on masculinity, acknowledges subjects' agency inherently.

Southern feminist criticism

Other criticism towards applying a Northern (pro)feminist theory in the South come from Southern feminist scholars. It is argued for instance that gender is not a foundational category in many African contexts (e.g. Amadiume 1987; Oyewumi 1997). A logical next step of the critique is towards the *priority* often given to gender in front of other structures of (possible) subordination, such as race, class and age – also in those Northern feminist theories that acknowledge intersectionality (Arnfred 2011).

For Connell, to understand gender fully, one needs to go beyond it and *vise-versa*: "To understand gender, (…), we must constantly go beyond gender. The same applies in reverse. We cannot understand class, race or global inequality without constantly moving towards gender" (Connell 2005a, 76). Gender is thus central, but embedded in, and interacting with other central structures. Further, not to pay attention to gender runs the risk of losing sight of *gender inequalities* (Morrell and Swart 2005), that do nevertheless exist.

"(The) tradition/al" as constitutive of masculinity

Kopano Ratele, the leading African voice on boys, men and masculinity, states that as the turn to boys, men and masculinities has not gone without resistance, contestation and contradictions in the continent, and as the opposing forces are to do with

cultural traditions in addition to gender itself, income-related issues, race etc., engagement with boys and men needs to consider also struggles around tradition (Ratele 2014, 30).

While there are obvious hegemonic ideas about masculinity in postcolonial countries, these ideas are complicated by the marginality of e.g. African society in juxtaposition to "powerful multinational capitalist ideologies" (Ratele 2014, 30). For this reason Ratele suggests that "we might be in need of culturally-intelligent studies (…) on men in their locatedness in their marginalized worlds" (ibid., 30). According to him, a door in gaining an access into masculinities located in this zone of marginality and representing pro-feminist work with men and boys as *pro-African* is the critical redeployment of the notion of "(the) tradition/al" as constitutive of masculinity (ibid., 30). This question is also kept in mind throughout this study.

3.4.2 Effects of current globalization

In addition to global history, contemporary globalization[15] must be part of our understanding of masculinities. This is because locally situated lives are (as they have been) influenced by geopolitical struggles. Following Connell's (2005a) argument, then, to understand local masculinities, as is my attempt, I must also think globally.

Investigating masculinities globally has already provided large evidence of multiple masculinities on a world scale – finding that argues strongly against essentialist perceptions on masculinity. In addition to the cross-cultural investigation, "thinking globally" when studying masculinity means examining the patterns of masculinity constructed in global forums, such as global markets, or under the influence of global processes (Connell 2007). As I am investigating local masculinities, I will be concentrating here on the second aspect, the local reconstruction of masculinities *under globalization*, that is.

Theories of globalization rarely speak of gender, but the world in which neoliberalism (the political change accompanied with globalization) for example is ascendant,

[15] Globalization is defined here, following Connell (2005a, 72), as the current pattern of world integration *via* global markets, transnational corporations, and electronic media under the political hegemony of the USA.

is a gendered world, and neoliberalism itself too has an implicit gender politics. Further, "under the pressure of global markets and media, but also as a result of active local desire to participate in the global economy and global culture, pressures for change are set up in the local gender order" (Connell 2005a, 77). This thus usually leads to some reconstructions of local masculinities. According to Connell, masculinities reconstruct in relation to all the substructures of gender relations, presented earlier, in the following manners when affected by globalization (ibid., 78-81):

Power relations: Women have increasingly been accepted in the public realm in the name of modernization, development and women's (human) rights. This is one of the most important and widespread of recent changes in gender ideology among men. At the same however, the creation of a Westernized public realm has seen the installation of large-scale organizations, such as corporations, where men continue to hold power. Globalization has also created situations where power is not firmly established and conflict and disorder prevail.

The division of labor (production relations): The world capitalist economy increasingly constructed men as wage earners and thus tended to reshape masculinity by linking gender identity with work. However, the same process has made the new masculinities *vulnerable* to the turbulences of that economy. Also, women's movement into employment is undermining these "work-based" masculinities. According to Connell, this is one of the main dynamics of change in contemporary masculinities.

Emotional relations: Narratives based on an ideology of romantic love and images based on Western models of attractiveness circulate worldwide. The exaltation of heterosexual romantic love has shifted the process of forming relationships out of the arena of "arranged marriages" into the arena of individual competition in a gender market. However, men strategically adopt or distance themselves from the hegemonic model. The "globalization of sexual identities" does not thus simply displace local models, but they interact in ways that provide opportunities for "code switching".

Symbolization (symbolic relations): Global mass media mainly follow Northern models, and as noted, gender imagery is an important part of what is being circulated. The relay of "metropolitan" media creates many opportunities for active appropriation and transformation of gender meanings. This is a two (or multiple)-way process, as the Western symbolism of masculinity is not fixed either, so the dynamics of globalization are also in play in the metropoles.

Even though I am only concentrating here on the local reconstruction of masculinities under globalization, it is worth pointing out how it is affected by the masculinity associated with those who control the dominant institutions of the world economy. Connell and Wood (2005) call it the "transnational business masculinity"[16]. We can recognize the world gender order, in which this masculinity is in power, through the gendered institutions that drive globalization, such as corporations, and the processes of globalization, such as global markets, as an arena of gender politics. The world gender order is "the structure of relationships that interconnect the gender regimes of institutions, and the gender orders of local societies on a world scale" (Connell 2005b, 72). The basic links that constitute the global gender order according to Connell, are: (i) interaction between existing gender orders, resulting in local gender patterns carrying the impress of the forces that make a global society (reconstruction of masculinities under globalization); and (ii) the creation of new global "spaces" and arenas, resulting in patterns of "globalizing" masculinity (patterns of masculinity constructed in global forums – hegemonic masculinity in the world gender order, which is, to some degree, standardized across localities) (ibid.).

In other words, and to sum up this high-flying, local masculinities are reconstructing under globalization, which in turn is driven by a specific "transnational business masculinity" at its wheel. In this way, the masculinity that is in a hegemonic position in the world gender order has an impact to local realities, possibly even on a very concrete level, through the kind of global processes it advances. In addition, it represents a form of hegemonic masculinity on the global scale.

[16] See more on transnational business masculinity in e.g. Connell (2012).

3.5 Concluding remarks

By using Connell's theory on masculinity, I am able to analyze specific masculinities, as is my attempt. The strength of her framework is that it provides a critical feminist analysis of historically specific masculinities whilst at the same time acknowledging the varying degrees to which individual men play in the reproduction of dominant forms of masculinity, thus overcoming the social determinism of the sex-role theory (Wedgwood 2009).

To enrich the analysis and make it more suitable for the context where the boys live in, I am also taking into account postcolonial perspectives. I however acknowledge that by using Connell's theory I am clashing with the meta-theoretical issues of the "colonization of knowledge" as well as the vexed relationship of a Northern discourse to Southern experiences.

To sum up the meaning of masculinity and the way it operates as understood in this study follows Connell's definition that masculinity is a place in gender relations, the practice through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture. Masculinities are produced by interaction with other structures forming hegemonic, subordinated, complicit and marginalized masculinities, and the relations between hegemony and domination / subordination and complicity on one hand, and marginalization / authorization on the other, form a framework for analyzing specific masculinities. The "transnational business masculinity" presents the form of hegemonic masculinity on a global scale, under whose influence local masculinities reconstruct.

Before proceeding in presenting the findings of this study, the perceptions of marginalized urban adolescent boys and men on masculinity and gender relations, and challenges that they face, I will go through the way they have been produced. The methodology, data and methods used in this study are thus introduced next.

4 METHODOLOGY, DATA AND METHODS

Choosing a research topic is a political choice based on the researcher's values. When choosing the topic, in addition to considering why the specific topic is worth

of studying, the researcher must also think about answers to questions such as to whom s/he writes for, how the results can be used, and what kind of understandings of the world does the study contribute to. Thus, the how of the research is intertwined with the what and the why of it.

In her book *"We real cool: Black Men and Masculinity"* (2004) bell hooks says that black women cannot speak *for* black men, but they can speak *with* them. Further, she talks about this dialogue, having the aim of black male liberation, as "work of true love" (bell hooks 2004, preface). I am in no way claiming, as a Nordic white woman, to have been able to conduct an equal "conversation of solidarity" with my interviewees. However, as bell hooks, as a woman albeit being white, I care about the plight of black men and their suffering. Equally so, nonetheless, I care about the gender based inequality (albeit differentiated) that black, or women of all "colors" including myself, face. Thus, what has motivated me on the selection of the topic of my research is that I see the plight of black men, the liberation of men in general from the requisition of "true" masculinity – however it is defined, and the emancipation of girls and women from gender based inequality as inseparable and intertwined. For this reason, I am interested in talking with the boys who have been the informants for this study, and bring their perceptions, experiences and voices heard, or at least my interpretation of them.

In this chapter I provide details on how the information given in this thesis has been produced for the reader to be able to asses it. I will start with methodological considerations, after which I will lay out the details of the data. Then, I will proceed in explaining the methods used in this study, both in data collection as well as in analyzing it. Special considerations besides general methodological and ethical ones, are given on researching young people throughout the chapter.

4.1 Methodology

In general, Pease and Pini (2013) argue that in critical studies on men and masculinities, notwithstanding the growth of the scholarship, there is relatively striking lack of interrogation of the epistemologies and methodologies involved in the study of men and masculinities (ibid., 1). It has been claimed that research on men and masculinities seldom acknowledge and address the "interplay between theory, epistemology

and methodology" (Popoviciu et al. 2006, 394 quoted in Pease and Pini 2013). This stands in stark contrast to feminist literature.

In much contemporary feminist writing, however, the search for distinctly feminist methods has also been abandoned as fruitless (Hughes and Cohen, 2011 according to Pease and Pini 2013). Instead, what is considered more important than the methods *per se*, is that the *what*, *how* and *why* of the research is informed by feminist epistemology and ontology – for example by the belief that women as a group are disadvantaged compared with men and that addressing gender inequality is a critical political task (Pease and Pini 2013, 4).

As this study is guided by a social constructionist theory of gender and masculinity, it takes seriously how meanings are socially constructed, such as also the information, or "facts", given by the interviewees in this study. The way in which the interviews for this study were conducted and to which methodology it is grounded in was informed by a problem-centred interview (PCI) technique. "The PCI is a methodical suggestion to reconstruct the interactively constituted knowledge in the social world in an interactive process between interviewer and respondent" (Witzel and Reiter 2012, 15).

I will explain the principles and practice of PCI in more detail when presenting my methods below. However, I want to emphasize here that as in PCI the interview is treated as an active and dynamic situation in which meanings are made in the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent, the same answers from the respondents would have not necessarily been obtained in another occasion since they emerge from the situation at hand (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). This resonates well with the common understanding within recent feminist theory on methodologies, albeit the variety of epistemological and ontological approaches within them, that knowledge and knowing are tied to time, place, and persons (Liljeström 2004).

4.2 Data collection

The empirical part of the study was conducted between September 13th and October 15th 2017 in Mukuru. During the data collection, 8 individual interviews and 1 group interview of two boys were conducted. Thus altogether 10 boys between the ages of 15 and 19 (averaging in 17.3) living in Mukuru were interviewed. According to Eder

and Fingerson (2001), when interviewing youth[17], it is essential that researchers examine the inevitable aged based power imbalance between adults and youth. One way in which the adult researcher's power may be reduced is by making the interviewing context as natural as possible (Eder and Fingerson 2001). As said, I interviewed the boys in their neighborhood, in a room that served as an office for an NGO working in Mukuru with which some of the boys were familiar. In one occasion, the interview was conducted at the boy's workplace as he was unable to leave it.

Half of the boys interviewed had dropped out of school before finishing high-school. Three boys were currently attending school and two boys had graduated high-school. Given the logistics of the interviews; I started off by interviewing boys who me and my "fixer" (a colleague of mine while I was volunteering in an NGO working with marginalized youth in Nairobi) encountered in the slum randomly during the days, I first thought that this would become a bias[18] in the data, so after I had conducted a few interviews with boys who had dropped out of school, I requested to interview boys who were still in school or who would have graduated. Nevertheless, it appeared that there were no differences in the perceptions of the boys along the lines of their current situation regarding schooling, but surely, there was some in the challenges they expressed to encounter. Out of the 7 boys who were not currently in school, only one was working and the rest of them, including the boys who had graduated, were now unemployed and had not proceeded with their education. They were thus, in their own words, now left to "idle" around with not much to do. They thus seemed to be content to take part in the interview as it was "something for them to do". The boys currently attending school were interviewed on weekends. In the interview situation, the boys did not seem to be in a hurry to go anywhere, and appeared to have been available to keep going on, but I usually stopped the interviews after one and a half hours the latest[19]. However, them not initiating wanting to stop the in-

[17] Even though some of the interviewees were above the age of 18, so officially adults, they were all under the age of 20, thus considered as adolescent.

[18] These numbers can however be estimated to be somewhat representative of the common situation in Mukuru at least based on the education level of respondents of a master's thesis study (Odhiambo 2012) conducted in Mukuru, in which 51 % of 144 respondents reported to have finished secondary level education.

[19] The interviews lasted between 0.5 and 1.5 hours, averaging however to be around one-hour long.

terview must also be considered in terms of the power relations of the interview situation, where I was the "more powerful" at least based on position (me being the interviewer), class, age[20] and race, as well as them awaiting potential gains from it.

The first interview, which was the group interview of two boys, was conducted with the assistance of my fixer. Even though a group setting is identified to reduce the power differential between the researcher and youthful respondents (Eder and Fingerson 2001), I found that in my situation, given the time constraints to conduct the interviews and the difficulty in getting the interviews set up (as I was dependent on my fixer's schedules and activity), I ought rather to try to have as many individual interviews as possible than try to get bigger groups to be interviewed (I had noticed that in a group of two one of the boys was left to conform the more outspoken one). So, instead of conducting group interviews, the power differential was reduced at least by conducting the rest of the interviews one-on-one, without the assistance of the fixer (so us "adults" would not outnumber the youth in the setting). The interviews were conducted in English. The fixer having had been present in the first interview had facilitated the reformulation of the questions to be more understandable for the respondents which also served the subsequent interviews.

Consent was asked from the interviewees to record the discussions. No concerns were raised from their part about it as neither from confidentiality that was assured to them. After conducting the interviews, they were transcribed. Long silences and emotions expressed such as laughter were remarked in the transcriptions as these might help to understand the attitude and feelings of the respondents. These transcripts served as the data for this thesis study.

4.3 Methods

4.3.1 Problem-Centered Interview (PCI)

Indeed, qualitative interviews were used as a method in gaining data for the thesis. In addition to that my purpose was to talk with the boys, a clear reason to conduct interviews with youthful respondents is to allow them to give voice to their own interpretations and thoughts rather than relying on adult interpretations of their lives and

[20] This can be questioned as most of the boys confusingly estimated me to be close to their age.

thoughts (Eder and Fingerson 2001). However, it is acknowledged that interviews *per se* might not be the best methods to reduce the power gap when studying youth. Instead, a photo-elicitation, for example, is widely recognized as being of great value in research situations where the power differential between the researcher and researched is particularly marked, such as when conducting research with youth (Barnes 2013). I did indeed try to include photo elicitation to my methods. This attempt was not successful however firstly because most of the boys did not have a phone with a camera on it (or a phone), and I was not equipped with e.g. disposable cameras to give them. There were two boys who were able and agreed to participate in the photo elicitation, but when we set up a time to look at their photos, I noticed that they had only taken them during the last hour or so (after having seen me come to Mukuru to meet with them). A realization of a successful photo elicitation with the boys would have thus required a lot more resources and support from my part that I was not able to deliver.

The interviews I conducted were informed and inspired by Problem Centred Interview (PCI) method. PCI informed interview was identified as a suitable method for this research as PCI is an appropriate method when investigating "through the eyes and lived experience of the people" (Schensul 2008, 521–2 quoted in Witzel and Reiter 2012, 4) meanings, experiences, behavior, their justification and evaluation, as well as individual opinions. In addition, PCI was considered especially suitable for this research as it is directed towards topics, objects and their interrelations, which are little explored (ibid.), as is the case with the gendered lives of marginalized urban adolescent men in Kenya.

The "problem" in PCIs denotes the specific research question or research aim of the study (Witzel Reiter 2012) – it does not have to be a "problematic" issue. A precondition for conducting PCI is however that the problem or research question is socially relevant; it should correspond to an everyday problem in the perspective of practical knowledge that the respondent can identify with and is motivated to deal with. This way the researcher can learn about the real motivations behind actions (ibid.). PCI was thus considered also to be suitable as the research studies the challenges that the boys face in their everyday lives.

PCI can be described as a qualitative, discursive dialogic method of reconstructing knowledge about relevant problems (Witzel and Reiter 2012, 4). This is thus also an appropriate method in interviewing adolescents, as one way in which a researcher can help youthful respondents' views to emerge is through a state of cooperation in which both the researcher and respondents form the discourse (Briggs 1986 according to Eder and Fingerson 2001). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) have distinguished between the interviewer as a miner and the interviewer as a traveler. A miner-interviewer has a targeted and well-defined interest, and s/he knows what to look for whereas a traveler-interviewer "wanders through the landscape" of the area under investigation being openly curious and involving herself in conversations, encouraging people to tell her about their experiences. In the context of PCI, interviewers take the role and attitude of a *well-informed* traveler (Witzel and Reiter 2012). This means that they have certain priorities and expectations and start the journey on the basis of some background information obtained beforehand. Yet the trip they will make and the story they will take home to depend on the people they meet on the road and on their insider knowledge (ibid.). This means that the interviewer can refine their assessment as well as to get a better idea about what is relevant and worth seeing based on conversations with the "locals". This kind of flexibility is also considered pivotal in studies of youth (Eder and Fingerson 2001). The idea of well-informed traveling and the involvement of the interviewer and his/her knowledge in a dialogue with respondents and their perspectives, outlines the discursive-dialogic character of PCI.

As said, in PCI, the researcher's prior knowledge defining and structuring the research interest enters into a discursive dialogue with the respondent's practical everyday knowledge about a relevant issue. In this way the inductive moment of fully considering subjective perspectives complements the deductive moment of building upon available prior knowledge from research in a way that allows novel data to question and revise previous knowledge (Witzel and Reiter 2012, 15). This managing of prior knowledge should also allow surprising findings by way of abductive inference in PCI (ibid.), which are more informed by *understanding* than clear cut inductive or deductive approaches (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009, 4).

To retain the requirement of openness of qualitative research, in PCI the researcher's prior knowledge is organized within a "sensitizing framework" that organizes the

prior knowledge into sensitizing concepts (Witzel and Reiter 2012). These concepts make distance to the actual research problem, but give guidance and a general frame to the research. They are elastic and open to revision because of their general, empirically empty nature, but they indicate where and what to look at. Precisely, they are open to be filled with empirical information on the research problem by the respondents' perspectives (ibid., 14–15).

PCIs adopt an active interview approach such as that of crafted by Holstein and Gubrium (1995) which emphasizes the creation of meaning in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. In addition to that the non-negligible influence of the interviewer at all stages of the research is acknowledged in PCI, it thus also accepts the active role of the respondent in the interview situation. In practical terms, PCI aims to facilitate the creation of a dialogic conversation structure that helps to unravel the respondents' perspectives on the particular problem (Witzel and Reiter 2012, 11). Like many other types of interviewing, the PCI makes use of an interview guide as a tool. Yet, Witzel and Reiter (2012) emphasize that this does *not* make a conventional semi-structured or guided interview, as the interview or topical guide of PCI does not have the purpose of establishing a question–answer scheme for working off a list of issues with open questions. Instead, in the sense of a road map of a well-informed traveler, the interview guide should establish a thematic frame supporting the researcher/interviewer in the purpose of problem centering. In PCI a question–answer pattern is replaced with an emphasis on the quality of the encounter as a (temporary) social relationship (ibid., 32–33).

Indeed, in the spirit of PCI, I had a topical guide when conducting the interviews, but as I went along with them, I adjusted the "problem centering" according to the issues emerging as relevant for my respondents and erasing or giving less emphasis on the ones that did not seem to have a meaning for them (which can also be a "finding" in itself though). However, I wasn't a complete "traveler" as I still had explicit interest in certain topics to which I held on to even when they did not appear to be the most relevant to my respondents.

4.3.2 Data analysis

The transcribed interviews, the data for this thesis, were coded for analysis. The coding took part in two cycles. In the first coding cycle, structural, in vivo, process, value, versus and emotion coding techniques were simultaneously applied in addition to theming the data (Saldaña 2009). Saldaña (2009, 64) suggests that simultaneous coding is appropriate for instance when the researcher's focus for the study includes several areas of interest, and if a single datum captures points related to more than one of those. This is the case with my research, as my research questions include both questions on perceptions of the boys as well as real life situations. In vivo coding is appropriate particularly for studies that prioritize and honor the participants' voices. As the adolescent voices are often marginalized, and coding with their actual words enhances and deepens the adult understanding of their cultures and worldviews (ibid., 74) this study leans mainly on in vivo codes. Values coding was emphasized when looking into the perceptions of the boys as these codes reflect the participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs representing their perspectives and worldviews (ibid., 89) whereas process coding related mostly to the challenges of the boys. Versus coding was useful in capturing emerging conflicts identified in the data.

In the second round of the coding, both hypothesis and pattern coding were applied. Pattern coding was used to identify major themes emerging from the data whereas hypothesis coding was used, as the name suggests, to scrutinize the hypothesis considering the boys engagement with hypermasculinity. What is especially interesting in this study, in my view, is the relation between the hypothesis and the patterns identified, elaborated more in the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

4.3.3 Ethical considerations

"What will you do to prevent our boys from dying and ending up in drugs in jail?"

(Interviewee 10)

Ethical issues are present throughout the seven research stages distinguished by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, 63) of an interview inquiry: thematizing, designing, interview situation, transcription, analysis, verification, and reporting. I have touched upon some of them already in this chapter such as that of choosing the topic of one's

study and those on interviewing adolescents. The ones I would like to highlight further here are concerning general methodological issues in critical men's studies, difference in culture and power, and verification.

The gender of the researcher matters, and especially so in CMS as people of different genders are positioned differently in patriarchal contexts. Whereas men conducting CSM need to e.g. be wary of not to replicate patriarchal biases, everyone doing CSM must reflect the desire to connect feminist/profeminist theory and practice (Pease and Pini 2013). Indeed, should feminist assumptions about rapport and reciprocity as positive and necessary in a feminist research encounter be questioned when male participants express for example sexist or derogatory views? In my case I adhered more on the feminist theory than practice in these kinds of situations, as I did not necessarily silence myself when these kinds of sentiments were expressed by the boys. I, however, rather *challenged* than *confronted* them. I don't see challenging the respondents' statements in this case as ethically questionable, but rather as complying with my interview method, which was one of a dialogue. Challenging the participants is also relevant from the point of view of verification, as it can elicit more accurate accounts when participants must defend their statements (which is something that would be likely to happen organically in a group interview setting (Eder and Fingerson 2001)). Challenging the boys openly face-to-face, done mostly in a humorous spirit not to make the respondents to shut down and retain an open atmosphere, appears also fairer to me than having critical assessments of their views only afterwards in written.

As stated, when collecting the data, my aim was to create an equal as possible dialogue between me and the respondent: I encouraged the boys to initiate questions and comments, as well as gave them opportunities to introduce their own topics and concerns into the discussion through open questions for example. After the interviews, I also distributed a follow up sheet where the boys could give feedback of me and the interview situation and add anything they wished to say. This gave them an opportunity also to elaborate important issues for them as well as change their views already given, if they wished to. However, differences in culture and power make attempts at reciprocity especially challenging (Eder and Fingerson 2001). In the interviews with the boys, using their second language, which not all of them was very

used to using, is definitely something that causes both an ethical issue (e.g. if the boys have not comprehended my question in a manner that they have been meant, and also if they were not able to express themselves in a manner that they would have wanted to) as well as an issue of verification (also as English is my second language as well, and even if it wasn't, the type of English that is spoken in Nairobi and e.g. in Europe vary a great deal and the meanings of words such as "girlfriend" are closely culture-bound). Giving a written sheet for them to add or change their responses etc., does not necessarily serve the purpose that it hopes to either, as writing things on paper might not be met with a comfortable feeling in all cultures, and in my case, at least one of the boys clearly struggled with writing *per se*.

However, there is also a potential for adolescents to gain from the research experience (Eder and Fingerson 2001), and in my case, having the occasion to speak English was considered as one by many of the boys. Nevertheless, the boys' demanded gains from the interviews – me being able to better their situation (quoted above) are obviously not met with their direct gain of getting a soda and a chat in English. Indeed, there is a great ethical issue in asking people as a researcher about the challenges and issues that they face, if not acting, or being able to act, upon what is being told. This was drastically experienced in my study as well as one of the boys who e.g. reported of his life having become *"too hard"* was shot dead by the police a few months after the interview. At the same time however, one could ask if it would be more ethical not to try to get these stories heard even if acting upon them is not simple or attainable.

In general, the study followed common ethical guidelines of informed consent and confidentiality: the participants were informed about the overall purpose of the investigation and that taking part is voluntary meaning also that they could withdraw at any point. It needs to be noted however, that even if some of the interviewees were underage, consent was not asked from their parents. According to the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK), when studying minors outside an institution such as school, researchers must evaluate by themselves when it is necessary to ask for a guardian's consent and that an ethical review must be requested for studies involving subjects under the age of 15. I tried to have the parents' consent, but as my request was met with a great nonchalance from both the fixer and the boys, I decided

to only interview boys above the age of 15 whom I also felt comfortable in interviewing without any other consent than that of their own. What comes to confidentiality, full anonymity was assured at all stages of the research. Some of the discussions revolved around issues such as stealing, which is a crime. I feel that all the boys did not fully trust the confidentiality of me and the research, as only one of them told me openly to engage in stealing, but in reality I have strong reasons to believe that more of them also do it. In the case of Mukuru, I did not feel ethically obliged to report on the boy who told me to engage in crime (and if I had felt that way I would have brought it up to the boys instead of assuring confidentiality) given the hardship of the boy and the lack of rule-of-law of the police.

Next, the findings of this study, grounded in the social constructionist theory of masculinity and obtained by the methods outlined above, are presented. As stated in this chapter, they are findings which are tied to time, place and persons. Still, they represent the perceptions of the boys, or my interpretations of them, at a certain time and place, so their reality, or at least a fraction of it, in the subjectively meaningful conduct of their lives, maintained by their thoughts and actions.

5 FINDINGS

My objective in this study is to gain insights of the beliefs and perceptions on aspects relating to masculinity, gender relations and equality as well as of lived everyday realities of marginalized urban adolescent boys. I am especially interested in finding out if these boys endorse and/or resort to "hypermasculinity" to assure themselves as male, as is suggested of boys and men who are "masculinity challenged". Second, I am curious of how the boys themselves articulate and understand issues that they face in their everyday life as they strive to fill the expectations, from themselves and the society, that they are faced with as boys, in the context of poverty. My "background objective" is to gain a more nuanced understanding of the claimed "hypermasculinity" of masculine threatened boys.

I will consider the boys' perceptions on masculinity and gender equality through four substructures of gender relations proposed by Connell (2002; 2005a): symbolic relations, power relations, production relations, and emotional relations. In addition to

the perceptions, I will consider the lived realities of the boys affecting them whenever feasible. This is done to understand what the social forces behind the boys' perceptions are and how they operate.

The second section of my findings concentrates on the issues and challenges that the boys articulate to face in their day-to-day lives as these are an integral part of their gendered lives. This inquiry along with understanding the beliefs and perceptions of the boys is needed as making boys and men allies in advancing gender equality requires that men themselves understand the beliefs and social forces that motivate their behavior. Indeed, that the way they live their life, the expectations, that they face etc. is not a "natural" order of things, but that men live highly gendered lives in which the gendered expectations are socially constructed. It is crucial that boys and men become aware of themselves as gendered beings and that they are better understood as such if advancing gender equality is of concern and objective.

I will start by looking at the perceptions of the boys on the symbolic relations, concentrating on the meanings that they have for different genders. Then I will proceed to focus on the boys' perceptions on gender equality by looking at their understandings of the power relations, production relations, and emotional relations between men and women. I will finish of my findings with the issues and challenges that the boys expressed to experience in their lives.

5.1 Straight-backed men and rude boys – perceptions on masculinities

As stated, marginalized urban adolescent men are considered "masculinity challenged" because of the hardship for them to acquire the status of a breadwinner to which masculinity is both globally and in most local contexts strongly tied to. My material strongly supports the well-documented (Izugbara 2015a) tendency of masculinity-threatened or -challenged men to reinforce the patriarchal ideal of self-sufficient men who can provide for others, which, ironically enough, also make them masculinity *challenged* in the first place.

5.1.1 Providing is the best – "ideal" man

I will start my analysis of the different forms of masculinities expressed by the boys, by looking first into the expressed features of a "properly masculine" man. The ideal

man was described by internal factors such as attributes ascribed to a man and his aspirations as well as by external factors such as what he has, does and does not do.

A "good" or "real" man was described i.a. to be wise, responsible, mature, confident, disciplined, hardworking, self-sufficient, and to know "himself", right from wrong and "how to talk". Further, an ideal man was seen as someone who is willing and able to provide for his wife and family; give advices; direct people from "bad things" to "good things"; make wise and firm decisions; manage himself and his time well; work hard; try his best; dress and look smart; "put God first"; and to strive for, or at least try to do his all for, a better future. In contrast, a "real" man was said to be someone who does not steal, "choose" work, idle or need guidance. Compulsory heterosexuality is evident as being a "real" man was also defined by having a wife and children, thus dependents in a heteronormative relationship.

The difference between a boy and a man was seen to be age (saying a boy is under the age of 18, which is also the legal age limit in Kenya), circumcision (a man being circumcised), knowledge, "thinking capacity", degrees of self-sufficiency, self-respect and self-discipline, and having a family and taking care of it. There was also views that there are separate boys and men's jobs as *"there are some (...) things [jobs] that a man can do, but a boy can't"* (interviewee 10) (because they would not know how to), as well as some "boys' jobs", such as hassling at *matatus* [a van turner into a minibus or a bus which are the local version serving the function of public transport] – the most common job among the boys interviewed.

The below extract demonstrates a view that the difference between a boy and a man is age and that men are, or should be, proud and disciplined and boys just idle with friends and know "nothing", and need adults' guidance – hence the high expectations for adulthood and manhood expressed by the boys.

> *Boy: (...) (B)eing a boy and being a man is something different, you see?*
> *Me: Yeah, what's the difference, like that's what I'm asking, what is…*
> *Boy: [Laugh] Okay, being a man, it will call for self-respect, you know? Discipline, you know? Yeah, yeah. Some sort of... But being a boy is like, you are under 18, you know nothing, you are like roaming with your friends, yeah, as in you can't do anything by yourself. You need some guidance, you see?*

(Interviewee 4)

Most of the attributes and aspirations ascribed to the "ideal man" were indeed linked to a self-sufficient man who is also able to provide for others besides for himself. Priced manhood appears thus strongly to be intertwined with breadwinnerhood in the boys' perceptions. This was also outspokenly stressed by saying for example that *"providing is the best"* (interviewee 5) when talking about manhood. Being "wise", making "wise decisions", "not stealing", "not choosing work" etc. were all used in examples of gaining income in a manner that "saves one's future", thus being able to become the breadwinner and build a better future.

Linking "proper" masculinity to breadwinnerhood and being a provider is by no means surprising as it is the global norm, as well as the norm in Kenya (e.g. Izugbara 2015a, 2015b; Silberschmidt 2011). The boys did however also take into account their surrounding in which becoming a solid and steady provider is increasingly challenging, as the requisite of providerhood was tamed in that a "properly masculine", or an "ideal man", at least *tries his best*, or *all*, to be able to provide. The reality of poverty and the challenge that it lays for being able to provide were thus acknowledged, but they did not question the requisite of becoming the provider. Rather, the challenge of gaining this position was seen to strengthen one's masculinity as going through a "struggle" was seen to make one even more a man.

Being a provider would not have a meaning without dependents. A "real" man thus has a wife and family whom he can provide for. However, as can be seen from the extract below, getting married was not only expressed as a "must" because of its link to providerhood and thus to "proper" masculinity, but also because of pressures coming from outside.

> *Me: Uh, what about one day, do you think you will want to get married?*
> *Boy: Yes, in the future that is a must, that is a must!*
> *Me: To get married?*
> *Boy: Yes! Because my father always tells me: "You can't stay in my home without a ring in your hand."*
> *Me: Is it the house you stay now, is it your dad's? Does he own it?*
> *Boy: It's my mother's, but you see, we have a house, a place where, if somebody dies, you can bury there. Not in Nairobi.*
> *Me: Okay, so you can't be buried there unless you get married?*

Boy: Yes.

(Interviewee 5)

I was told that not being buried "home" – on a piece of land that the family owns usually outside of Nairobi, most likely in the location where their parents or grandparents are from – "ancestral land", but on a public cemetery is a disgrace. It thus appears that being a man and not getting married, or not continuing the family, is disrespectful and shames the parents to the extent that an unmarried man does not deserve to be buried "home".

Tribe, religion and manhood

The boys interviewed belonged to at least four different tribes[21] and were either Muslims (2 boys) or Christians (8 boys) by their religion. They seemed to be somewhat knowledgeable of their tribe cultures, and that of other tribes' too – especially the Luo's notorious ritual of pulling off six lower teeth in rite of passage to adulthood appeared to be known for all. However, none of the boys expressed directly that their tribe membership would affect them or their lives in any ways or that they would identify with their tribe's manhood rituals. Tribe customs, such as the aforementioned pulling out teeth, were rather claimed to not matter or even to be unchristian, and thus bad, as can be seen from the extract below:

"(M)e, I cannot remove this my teeth because God given to me them. I can't remove them"

(Interviewee 5)

It needs to be noted however, that as this ritual has fallen largely out of use, especially in the urban areas, it is not surprising that life without teeth does not appear appealing to the boys in the world that they live in, nor does the act of their removal. Pleading to religion might in part thus be employed as a (also learned) justification and support of these sentiments.

[21] The tribes were: Croslite-Borana (1 boy), Kamba (2,5 boys*), Kikuyu (4 boys) and Luo (2 boys). *One of the interviewees told me: *"Tribe? Let's say my mom is a Kamba, but my father is a [some other tribe name]. Cause, my father, my real, real father, [has been] dead [since] long time ago. So, my mom got another guy, then I was born."* (Interviewee 3)

Indeed, the boys claimed that tribe rituals or culture would not affect them or their lives in anyways – that it is unchristian, something that happens in the rural areas outside of Nairobi, or that it doesn't exist anymore. However, circumcision, which was in most cases paradoxically linked to one's tribe's customs, even mistakenly as in the case of the Luo, was considered central. Circumcision seemed to be mattering however mostly because of peer pressure, not because of honoring traditions or identifying with them. The boys who are circumcised later than in early childhood felt embarrassed and were ridiculed by other boys to the extent that they needed to hide their uncircumcised penis as the below extract demonstrates. Here we also encounter Connell's (2005a) claim that bodies matter and that they are also objects of masculinity as practices relating to them have effects i.a. on bodily experiences. Circumcision appears here as a practice forming a structure within which bodies are appropriated and defined.

> *Boy: Yeah, I was really willing! [To be circumcised] [Both laugh] Cause at school I would wonder, eh, my boys, my friends, most are circumcised*
> *Me: [Laughing] How do you know? They tell you, or?*
> *Boy: Ah, when you go to the toilet, you are like, you know we wear shorts? You are like, even you need to hide to a corner so that you can help yourself*
>
> (Interviewee 8)

In sum, whereas tribe culture was not expressed to matter by the boys (apart from circumcision, which mostly is a part of it, or at least was considered to be a part of it), religion was seen very important. At least being "a good Christian" was expressed as one of the constitutions of an "ideal man" to the boys who were Christians.

To distinguish, whether the features and attributes of an "ideal man" were thought to be universal ideals applicable to people in general, both men and women, or specifically ideals linked to manhood, and to contrast the meanings that the boys give to different genders, I will analyze the boys' ideals given for women next.

"Ideal" woman

Whereas being able to provide, or to try his best to be able to, was unanimously seen as something that a proper man should do, the opinions of women's role in providing

were diverse. When asked what makes a "real" woman, capability to provide was never brought up (which is not surprising as this was thought as a defining feature of *manhood*), but when asking specifically whether women should also take part in providing for the family, answers differed from clear cut rejections such as *"it [providing] should be for man, not for a woman"* (interviewee 9) to endorsing a thought that both men and women could take part in providing.

Reasons given for why it is men's, and not women's, responsibility to be the breadwinner were based on a thought of men being physically stronger than women, or even on a thought of women's weakness, as well as on a belief of women being unable to handle money wisely as it was said that a woman would spend the money, if she was to provide for her family, on something else.

As stated above, an ideal manhood was constructed around being able to provide for oneself and others (namely wife and family). Against this backdrop it is very interesting how girls and women who were mainly seen as to be looking to be provided for from men were highly criticized by the boys. Women who looked first and foremost for a provider and breadwinner in men were contested by calling them "vipers" and "gold diggers". It was claimed that some girls and women "love" money, and this was disapproved. Instead, in addition to some overlapping attributes such as being responsible, "firm decision-maker", and hard-working, the equivalent attribute for an "ideal" woman as to men's providerhood was to be understandable when there is not enough money. The double standard between ideal men being first and foremost providers, and ideal women not to look only for a provider, is clear. The "ideal" man is the provider, but the "ideal" woman does not only look for a provider and "understands" when the man is unable to provide.

Emphasizing women having to be "understandable" is, well, understandable as it was linked to women's fidelity. A woman who is not "understandable" was considered to be prone to infidelity, meaning that she was thought to engage with other men for money in situations where there wasn't enough money. It remains unclear however, how this kind of situation should properly be handled by women who were thought to be "meant" to be provided for by men, according to the boys.

The ideals given to a man stressed features such as being "smart", responsible, in control and making wise decisions. The sentiment was however that boys in the slum don't act this way as the boys claimed that there is "bad company" and "rude boys" everywhere in the slum. Next, I will consider this condemned, yet apparently a very common form of masculinity among the adolescents in the slum.

5.1.2 A man thinks more than a rude boy – condemned masculinity

"They're everywhere here, so avoiding them is difficult"

(Interviewee 10)

Trying to stay out of "bad company", "bad friends", "rude boys" etc. was constantly expressed by the boys. "Bad company" was defined by features such as stealing, drug abuse, not "saving one's future" or thinking smart, and peer pressure. In addition, it was said that boys who harass girls are the rude boys. All my interviewees touched upon the issue of bad company as something that they wanted to stay away from. At the same time however, "bad company" were stated to be "everywhere" in the slum so that it was said to be hard *not* to stay with them.

Even though bad company was defined for example by stealing, and it was said for example that boys in the "ghetto" "like" stealing, at the same time that stealing and boys who steal were condemned as bad, it was also acknowledged that some boys steal because of *need*[22]:

> *"Some they go to steal because they are needy and they don't have something to eat."*
>
> (Interviewee 2)

Further, rap and reggae music and parties along with their "gangsta" imagery, which is exactly aligned with attributes defined to "bad company" with guns, cannabis leaves and joints etc., were immensely popular among the boys, everyday and everywhere. Most of the boys also told to admire "rastas" and avowed themselves of being one. This imagery was especially present in matatus, in which the majority of the

[22] It should be noted however that what is considered as an essential need and what is seen as a want is subjective and can differ between individuals. Eating is however a basic need for all.

boys work and spend their days at. The industry has also become known for infamously dangerous driving habits, and it has been linked with violent criminal gangs (The New York Times 2018). The matatus are painted and decorated with designs featuring hip hop artists (some of whom have died from gang violence, such as the American rap legend Tupac), international pop stars, athletes, political and religious figures, and so on, representing the urban youth culture of Nairobi. It has even been claimed by locals that "(w)hen you see the matatus and the art [on them], you really understand Nairobi, because Nairobi is a city that is run by the youth" (CNN 2017).

The case of the "rastas" is interesting, as they were at once both admired by some of the boys and contested by others. Whereas "rastas" were mainly admired because of reggae music *per se*, they were contested because admiring them was seen to spur drug abuse. The below extract is from a boy who does not attend reggae parties, which was one of the favorite pastimes of most of the boys, because he thinks that admiring the reggae artists leads boys to use cannabis. As using drugs was one of the defining features of "bad" boys, it appears that the "rastas" are idols for "bad" boys.

> *[The boy tells that he doesn't listen to reggae music]*
> *Me: So you don't go, do you ever go to the reggae parties?*
> *Boy: I don't like them. It's just that most of the singers, they use some bhang [cannabis](…)*
> *Me: Yeah, do you think it's like bad company, or? At the parties*
> *Boy: Uh, let me come back to reggae. Most of my friends they listen to reggae. They become interested in the singers, musician, who sing reggae, who use drugs. So they would like to be like them. Cause they use drugs, just to be like them, that's why*
>
> (Interviewee 9)

I will get back to the thematic of "bad company" in the chapter on the challenges that the boys face. For now, it is sufficient to conclude that even though "bad company" was a condemned form of masculinity as "real" men were said *not* steal, idle or to basically do any of the things that "bad company" was defined by, it also appeared to be the most common one among the boys in the slum.

In this chapter I have scrutinized the attributes and definitions of the boys of an "ideal" man and woman, as well as of boys who were not considered as "good", thus the boys' perceptions on the symbolic gender relations. It seems that gender is highly essentialized and "biologicalized" by the boys: men have to be providers because *"women were not born to work hard enough"* (interviewee 6) to do it. The analysis of the boys' perceptions on the symbolic gender relations will help me to understand their perceptions on gender equality, the topic of the next chapter, where they derive from, as well as the challenges and opportunities in the lived realities of the boys regarding gender equality. For now, it is sufficient to recap that according to the boys, an ideal man is able to provide, or at least tries his best to be, is smart and self-sufficient, and does not demonstrate the features that "bad company" is defined by, such as stealing and using drugs.

5.2 The head for woman is man and head of man is God – perceptions on gender equality

In the previous chapter the boys' perceptions on manhood and masculinities were explored. It was found out that "being able to provide" was considered as a key feature of "true" manhood. In this chapter I will analyze the boys' views about gender relations and equality, which naturally are intertwined with their views about "proper" masculinities and femininities.

It appeared that most of the boys were, or thought themselves to be, to some extent for gender equality. However, the limits in which they are for it affect gender equality significantly – something that the boys themselves might not be aware of. I will consider the boys perceptions of gender equality through power relations, production relations, and emotional relations between men and women.

5.2.1 They're equal because they're both people – power relations

"In the past, let's say one generation ago, women were not even counted as people, you see? But now they're counted"

(Interviewee 6)

In the opening chapter of this section, I argued that most of the boys were for gender equality to some extent. As we can see later, this request was however limited and

stood in contradiction with their other views. Nevertheless, the boys viewed that both men and women "are people", and should thus be equal in comparison to the "olden days" when women were not "even counted as people". The boys indeed valued girls' education, and success. They wished their girlfriends (or claimed girlfriends), friends and sisters to i.a. educate themselves, "work hard" and "follow their dreams". "The olden days" were criticized also in the question of land ownership as it was considered not being right that women used to not be allowed to own *shamba* [land].

The fact that *some* women are doing better than *some* men was used as evidence for a thought realization of gender equality in comparison, again, to the "olden days" (even though this has, of course, always been the case):

> *Me: Do you think that men and women are equal?*
> *Boy: I think we're equal, but it determines, the efforts that you may put. Cause even at the moment, you may get [that] a woman really struggles and performs more than even, even a man. It isn't like the olden days, that it was said that it's always that a man is at a better state than a woman, you see?*
>
> (Interviewee 8)

Most of the boys indeed called for gender equality in the overall power relations, meaning the public realm of the society, because men and women are "both people". However, there were also sentiments, against men and women, boys and girls' equality *per se* because of reasons that the interviewee himself could not articulate, but which were, in fact, related to the production relations discussed in the next chapter:

> *Me: Do you think that men and women are equal?*
> *Boy: No*
> *Me: Should they be equal?*
> *Boy: According to me, girls they should be somehow a bit below*
> *Me: Why?*
> *Boy: Because boys, just, they [girls] need to have such respect for boys*
> *Me: Why?*
> *Boy: [Long silence] I can't explain it*
>
> (Interviewee 10)

In sum, the boys supported a view that men and women should be somewhat equal in the "public realm" such as e.g. in education and land ownership rights. It was even

considered that gender equality has realized itself at this level, as *some* women are doing better than *some* men. It remained however to be seen what the boys' reactions would have been, if for example there had been a female candidate at the presidential elections happening at the time of the interviews. What I mean is that, taken that Kenya is a highly patriarchal society, the notion that "we are both people" might appear as gender equality to the boys and thus they are for it, but how they would react if the patriarchy *de facto* started falling in Kenya, remains open. In the next chapter I will discuss a structure, partly in which changes to gender power relations at least were not welcomed by the boys – the (re)production relations.

5.2.2 …But he has the responsibility to be the head of the family – production relations

I will scrutinize the production relations through the division of labor. Further, I will look into the division of labor separately in the "public sphere", thus in wage labor, and in the "private sphere" meaning the household level. I examine these spheres separately because I found that the boys' view about gendered division of labor differed in these two spheres. I will start by analyzing their views about gendered division of labor in the public sphere, thus in wage labor.

Gendered division of labor in wage labor

> *"(P)eople see that that is a work for a man, but me I say that that is a work for both of us"*
>
> (Interviewee 5)

It appeared that seeing a woman in a predominantly "men's job", affected the boys' views about gender equality. Seeing a woman for instance driving a matatu, which rarely occurs, made at least one of the boys to say that he *thinks* that men and women are equal. It can thus be argued that the environment, what the boys *see*, affect the way they *think*. What I mean is that seeing a woman driving a matatu, broadened this boy's view, in that seeing something that he had previously perhaps considered as something only for men being done by a woman, affected him to think that there should not be such a thing as "men and women's jobs", in other words, gendered division of wage labor at least in the extent that it exists.

However, the same applied in reverse. *Not* seeing women in some industries reinforced at least the following boy's view that men and women are not, and should not be, equal:

> *Me: So do you think men and women should be equal?*
> *Boy: No (...)*
> *Me: Why?*
> *Boy: Uh, for example in some industries, you will find [that it] is just men working there. There's no woman working in that industry. Because the work that is being carried out inside the industry is just for men. It cannot be done by a woman*
>
> (Interviewee 9)

When I specified, would a woman be allowed to work in this industry if she was capable of doing it, e.g. being strong enough to be able to, the boy refused to think that a woman could be strong enough and that she would *ever* be allowed to.

The view that a woman was not allowed to work at an industry, even if she would have the abilities to do so, makes it clear that the ban would only be based on gender. Men and women were thus seen essentially different. In addition, that this essence made it impossible for the boys to think women e.g. working in certain industries and being the "heads of the households", as appears in the next section, the boys also thought that it affects them as employees. For example, this exchange took place when we talked about female police officers:

> *Boy: Women, they don't know how to kill*
> *Me: Oh, really?*
> *Boy: Yeah, but [for] men it's easy*
>
> (Interviewee 2)

Not only does the boy think that women are unable to kill, but that it is *easy* for men to kill. Women and men are thus viewed essentially different, women being sensitive, or simply humane, and men emotionless predators to the extent that it is easy for them to even kill people.

However, even though the boys viewed men and women as essentially different, they endorsed the view that there should not necessarily be separate men and women's jobs – which is in line to the previous chapter on gender equality in the "public

sphere" –, but that first of all, both men and women should be able to work for money, and second that women should be able to work whereas men, meaning in similar jobs etc. This was nevertheless not a unanimous view among the boys as some of them did claim that women should not be allowed to work in all jobs – a view based on a thought difference in essence between men and women, where *women*[23] simply are not strong enough to work certain jobs. In addition, it was viewed that gender affects the way people do their jobs, for example, a woman police officer not being able to kill[24].

Even though it was viewed that men and women should be equal, at least to an extent, in *"some situations"* (interviewee 5) and some "spheres", such as the public, there was a sphere in which men's authority was not to be contested according to the boys – that of the household.

Gendered division of labor at home – "an African thing"

> *"(I)f you see a house having a man and a wife, [the one] who is the person that his voice or her voice is supposed to be saying in that house, is a man. You cannot, you cannot say [that in] this house [it] is the wife that is controlling this house. That is like, this guy is so, his wife is just like beating*[25] *him up. (…) You know, just like the wife is a man and the man is a wife"*
>
> (Interviewee 5)

Indeed, it was very strongly viewed by the boys that a man needs to be the "head" of a family and household. It was viewed, essentializing again, that women *"can't rule"* (interviewee 6), and that only fathers, thus men, are able to *"stand up"* and *"defend"* the family (interviewee 8), referring to the physical predominance of men, as well as that *"there are some decisions, which a woman cannot make"*[26] (interviewee 7). It was also seen that if there was no such a thing as the "head" of a household, there

[23] Italics added to stress that the divisive feature indeed is *gender* and not e.g. skills and abilities.
[24] I will grasp the fact that killing was indeed viewed as a central work task of a police officer in the next chapter of the analysis.
[25] This statement also demonstrates how this boy associates being a man to committing gender based violence.
[26] The only such decision that the boy came up with however was that of the timing of a son's circumcision.

would be constant fighting[27], and that this was why *"there have to be rules"* (interviewee 6), *ergo* that a husband and a wife have a gendered division of labor that they need to apply to.

Being "the head" was endorsed as more or less an authoritarian position:

> *Me: (...) (I)s there such a thing as "head of a household"?*
> *Boy: You know like in a family, [laughs] a man always has to be, the man of the family, you know?*
> *Me: What does it mean?*
> *Boy: He has to be the head. But when it comes to decision making, he will also need to consult the woman*
> *Me: Does the man has the last word?*
> *Boy: It can be the last word if he's right. But if he's wrong, it can never be the last word*
>
> (Interviewee 8)

In the above extract we can first of all see that a *man* is equated with the head (of a household), thus it *always* has to be a man who is the head. However, a head should not be authoritarian, but he should *consult* the woman, and he should only have "the last word", *if* he is *right*. Now it would appear logical that the one who is to decide who is right would be the "head", as the first extract also confirms (saying it should be the man's voice that should be heard in a house).

Nevertheless, and this is of importance, it appeared that the situation in which men are the "heads", was mostly either seen as an equal one, from a gender equality perspective, or unequal for *men*. In other words, it was by no means viewed as unequal for women. A setting in which a man is the head, was seen as unequal for men because being the head meant also them having the *responsibility* to provide. Being "the head" and providing were thus linked together.

Even though the boys were very resentful towards the idea that a head of a household could be a woman or that there would not be such, there were also some voices saying that if it was a woman who provides in a family, she could be "the head". However, a situation in which a woman provides was also quickly associated with "sugar

[27] The example given of a constant fighting that would appear if the husband was not the head was that a woman would refuse to cook.

mommies" expressed with a criticizing tone, and dooming people taking part in such a setting as being the *"most foolish ones"* (interviewee 6).

In reality, many of the boys' mother, in one case a grandmother, indeed also was the "head" of the family as five of the boys' (half of the boys interviewed) fathers were either not living with them, or completely out of picture. All the boys also "knew of" boys who have gotten a girl pregnant (unwantedly), but were not involved in taking care of the child or the mother. It was claimed that if the parents (the boy and the girl) revealed who the father of the baby is, the girl's parents would "chase" her out of the house to be taken care of by the father who would not have the means to do it – and for this reason both the adolescent parents would prefer not to tell who the father of the baby is. Here seeing things being done differently than in the ideals, did thus not seem to change the beliefs of the boys as in the case of wage labor for instance, which emphasizes how strongly masculinity built on providing was naturalized.

The boys were thus very firm in their view that there must be a "head of a household" and that that has to be a man (even when real life situations did not comply with this scenario). And because being the head was thought to include responsibilities such as providing, it was seen as inequality for men. Women, on the other hand, were said to always be able to get married (thus to go to get provided for), whereas *"a man, you need to struggle on your own"* (interviewee 8). Thus, a life of a boy compared to girls' was also seen as *"I guess harder"* (ibid.).

Even though the situation where a man needs to be the head of the family was seen to cause inequality for *men*, the boys still strongly endorsed it. This is because it was seen as stemming from biology as well as religion *("the head for woman is man and head of man is God"*, interviewee 6) – thus as something that can't be changed. Also, being "the head" means being "the provider", which in turn is the building block of "true manhood".

In addition to that it was seen that in the gendered division of labor at a household level, the man has to provide and thus be "the head of the family", the boys' views followed a very unsurprising and known pattern: girls and women were seen as

"born" to take care of children, and basically to do everything else in the house except for perhaps to fetch water – it is too heavy. These production relations were also referred to as an *"African thing"* (interviewee 8). Boys and men were seen to be able to *help* sisters, wives and mothers in the household chores, especially if they are sick, but in a normal situation, *"they [girls] give us easy time"* (interviewee 10) as:

> *Boy: A boy can't wash the plates when a girl is sitting. You know, that can't happen*
> *Me: Why not?*
> *Boy: Because it was meant for them since some years back*
>
> (Interviewee 10)

In sum, the boys highly endorsed a gendered division of labor at home, in which a following logic took part: women are not born to work hard enough, thus it is men who have to be the providers, which gives them the status of being the head of the household. The "responsibility" of being the head (to provide) was thought to put men in an unequal situation in relation to women, but to also give them the ultimate power to have their voice "heard" in the household[28]. Men's work appeared thus to be valued more than women's, as it was considered that men are in an unequal position in relation to women because of their role as the provider without acknowledging that the triple burden of women (women's work include reproductive -, productive - and community managing work (Adeniyi-Ogunyankin 2012) whereas men mainly only do productive work, as the boys emphasized) would put them in an unequal position in relation to men as they in fact end up working *more*[29] (if not around the clock) than men because of it.

However, even though it was seen that a man should be respected in the family, *ergo* have his voice heard, it was also thought that he should listen to the wife and *"give her what she wants"* (interviewee 6). The point on "giving her what she wants", is related to emotional relations as is the fact that the most important person for the boys was almost without exception said to be their mother despite the emphasis put

[28] In addition to the role of the provider, age was said to play a role in having authority in a household.

[29] According to the Centre for Time Use Research (CTUR) and the UN, no national time use surveys have been conducted in Kenya (as of 1988). Time use studies globally have shown however that women work longer hours than men when both paid and unpaid work is counted, and that much of women's work is undervalued because it is more often unpaid than men's work (UN).

on the "man's role" in a household. Next, I will look into this remaining substructure of gender relations proposed by Connell to complete my analysis of the boys' perceptions on gender relations – that of emotional relations.

5.2.3 You know, money is everything – emotional relations

It appeared that it was important for most of the boys to have a girlfriend, or at least to appear as to have one, as I was told by a few of the boys that they have a girlfriend even if in reality they did not have one. Two narratives on emotional relations with girls took place among the boys: that of an ideology of romantic heterosexual love and one where having money was acknowledged central in relationship forming. I will start by examining the notion of romantic love.

Romantic love

"I have a girlfriend who makes me so crazy"

(Interviewee 9)

Indeed, most of the boys told me that they have a girlfriend, even one that they *love*, even though in reality some of the boys who claimed this did not have a girlfriend at all. Loving their girlfriends, or "girlfriends", was performed strongly by the boys. Only one of the boys said that he does not have time for girlfriends currently because of school. Also, only one of the boys admitted that he doesn't have a girlfriend, even though he would like to have one, and this was according to him because he hadn't *fallen in love* yet. The ideology of romantic love was clearly endorsed by the boys also for example by telling how their girlfriends "love" them *"just the way they are"* (interviewee 10), and denying that their girlfriends would *"mainly"* expect money from them (interviewee 8). One of the boys' father had two wives. When asking whether the boy would also like to live in polygamous relationship one day, he rejected the thought saying that he would only like to have one wife. Monogamous heterosexual romantic love appeared thus to be the ideal emotional relation with girls for the boys.

The boys claimed that girls also expect them to be even overly romantic. As one of the boys explained:

> *Me: Do you feel like there's other expectations from girls? [Besides money]*
> *Boy: Sometimes like you have to be able to be so romantic. Something like, if a girl tells you: "today I am not feeling like walking, I just feel like being carried." (…) (I)f she's the one that I love, I'll do that*
>
> (Interviewee 5)

These narratives of romantic love and of relationship formation based on it stood in contrast with the many claims that money is involved in relationship formation with girls.

"Money is everything"

"Yeah, without money it's hard to capture her"

(Interviewee 2)

The boys stressed being "in love" with their girlfriends and "girlfriends" and that their girlfriends are not the kinds of girls who "love" money, and that they don't expect money from them, thus idealized the kind of romantic love outlined above. In some statements it was however expressed how it is hard to "capture" a girlfriend without money and that *"maybe sometimes you don't have that little money to give her"* and she'll go to another boy who has so that *"it's difficult to stay with one [girlfriend]"* (interviewee 10).

Girls were told to be asking boys for money for everything from lipsticks and drugs to food (because they might have not eaten anything on that day). The pattern of this money giving will be examined in more detail in the following chapter. However, romantic love was idealized by the boys claiming that their girlfriends don't want money from them. Nevertheless, some of the boys outspokenly said that it is difficult to get a girlfriend if one doesn't have money that he could spend on the girl, as:

> *"If you find a girlfriend, [she] expects you to be, she tells you: "today, I am feeling like going out". Yeah, something like that. "I'm feeling like eating chips" (…) Yeah, and they expect you like to be having money"*
>
> (Interviewee 5)

The notions of romantic love and giving money to girls were also tied together in that it was claimed that girls expect boys to show their love for them with gifts etc., even

if "these kinds of girls" were also criticized. Simultaneously however, that girls who "look at money" were criticized, the boys did dream about being able to provide for their girlfriends and future wives. It was in part also viewed as positive that boys "have to" buy things for girls and girlfriends and to give them money, because it was thought that girls thus make boys *"not to be lazy"* (interviewee 2).

In this chapter, I have attempted to examine the boys' views about gender equality. It appeared that gender inequality was viewed in terms of men being in an unequal position in regard to women as they are the ones who "have to" provide for the family. There was also a bias on views about gender equality between a "public" and a "private" sphere. The boys were more for it in the public sphere, meaning that they endorsed less gendered division of labor in wage labor and equal rights in general for both genders. However, in the "private sphere", at the household level, gendered division of labor was fully endorsed and promoted for, *even though*, paradoxically, it was seen to put *men*, as the heads of the households, in an unequal position compared to women. The gendered division of labor at the household level was however still endorsed because it was seen as stemming from e.g. biology and religion, thus being something unchangeable and natural. In the emotional relations, romantic love was idealized, but reality indicated that money indeed plays a part in relation formation between boys and girls.

It is fruitful to examine the boys' attitudes towards gender equality in different gender relations to identify the painful spots and on the other hand avenues to enhance it. In the next chapter, I will scrutinize issues and challenges of the boys against the backdrop of the perceptions presented in these two previous chapters.

5.3 Thieves and police – challenges

"We have got so many challenges"

(Interviewee 2)

In this chapter I will look at the issues and challenges that the boys expressed to face in their everyday lives. By looking at these challenges we are able to get a better grasp of the lived realities of the boys. The boys clearly had challenges to comply

with the role of a self-sufficient man who is able to provide, and reaching to be able to do this, such as working at random jobs on the streets, caused them new challenges and put them in a fragile situation. The challenges that they face illuminate the "genderness" of their lives as well as to why hypermascular behavior might sometimes be adopted even though it was considered contradictory to ideal masculinity.

5.3.1 We have nothing to do – poverty and idling

The boys interviewed were either in school (3 boys), graduated secondary or high-school (2 boys) or dropped out of school before graduating high-school (5 boys). One of the boys who had dropped out was planning to go back to finish his high school. The reason given for having to have dropped out of school was the lack of money for school fees except for the case of the boy who was going to go back – he wanted to change schools because of his former school teachers' violence against the pupils. The boys currently attending school also reported not being able to stay there all the time because of lack of money for the school fees.

Boys who were not attending school were all facing unemployment, expect for one, who was working full hours in his father's shop. The most common source of income for these boys was to direct people in matatus of which the driver or the conductor of the bus would give them a small commission. One of the boys reported that if he worked a whole day he could earn KSH 500 [around 4 € with the current exchange rate] in this way. Usually, this did not happen however, as the boys shared the work available among themselves, meaning that one could hardly ever work a whole day. Few of the boys' fathers could also employ them sporadically. However, all in all, whether the boys had dropped out of school or graduated, they were now faced with unemployment and *"nothing to do"* (interviewee 2) unless being employed by their father. One of the reasons given for not getting an employment was corruption and nepotism. Unemployment left the boys to "idle" around with nothing to do and to do "hustling" such as the work at matatus.

All the boys who had dropped out of school said that they would have liked to continue with their education. The ones who had graduated, wished to also continue their education at a higher level with a help of a government scholarship, but to which their final grades had disappointedly not been strong enough. It was viewed that with

education one could "save their future" by getting a good job, which was desired. The boys were clearly frustrated with their situation of not being able to "move on". As one of the boys explained:

> *"Now (...) you reach at the point of, you're at the age of 18, you get to understand that I need to move on. Or have a different life from this. (...) So, [that's] when you start looking for work, there are no works, you know? (...) You might search for almost a year and not [be] successful at all."*
>
> (Interviewee 8)

In addition to unemployment, the boys reported that there is nowhere to "improve their talents" in the slum. The boys had many hobbies (though in which they dreamt about to become professionals to get a "ticket out" of the slum and poverty – this is especially common among boys who play football, which is hugely popular) that they would like to do, but it was said for instance that playing basketball was difficult because most of the boys who play it come from rich families and don't include the boys from the slum to play with them. One of the respondents reported to go to skate in the city where he had made friendship with "rich boys". In general, an us (boys from the slum) / them (boys from other classes) division came up throughout the interviews, and will be touched upon again later.

Being unemployed left the boys not to be able to "move on" in their lives, a feeling of "waithood"[30] instead of "adulthood", to idle with nothing to do and to hustle on the streets. In addition to that this situation made the boys feel frustrated and even hopeless, it also put them in a very fragile situation as they are exposed to peer pressure coming from "bad company" and police harassment when "idling", not to talk about the financial constraints that it causes.

5.3.2 They can make your life too hard – bad company

As said earlier, all the boys talked about "bad company" that was said to be "everywhere" in the slum. This was also identified as one challenge facing the boys according to them, especially in the form of peer pressure coming from friends that were

[30] More on waithood, see e.g. Honwana (2014).

considered as bad company. The issues that the boys faced that were said to derive from the peer pressure of bad company were drug abuse[31] and stealing. They were also seen to be linked to one another as getting money for drugs was said to be one of the reasons for boys to go into stealing.

Drugs

Many of the boys indeed visibly used drugs (other than alcohol) and some of them openly told me to use them. This was even if drug abuse was considered as a defining feature of bad company and thus condemned as something that one should, and would want to, stay away from. As to why boys[32] do drugs, one of the interviewees responded:

> *"(B)ecause you may find [that] you've lost your favorite friend so you want to forget. And (...) then there's pressure from boys, my fellow youths. You see them doing it, and there's that discouraging you, telling you "you know nothing about life". So [you] end up joining them."*
>
> (Interviewee 10)

Many of the boys indeed reported to have lost friends or that they knew many boys from slums who have been killed – something that I will grasp on soon. What comes to drug abuse, the boys clearly did not admire it, or think it is "cool", at least officially or outspokenly. However, the "bad company" – what appeared as the majority of boys in the slum, seemed to encourage and pressure their friends to do drugs saying one knows "nothing" about life if one hasn't tried them. This would indicate that at some level and for some boys drugs did represent a thrill of which if one does not have an experience of, they would know "nothing". Few of the boys also told that they had tried drugs, but hadn't continued to use them. Similarly to the peer pressure to use them, braking off them was also reported to be met with resistance by their peers. The ones who had not wanted to continue doing drugs said that they had had to stop their friendship with the group of friends who do them as they were accused for "betraying" them.

[31] Alcohol, cannabis and *khat* [a chewing leaf which is slightly narcotic] were included in the boys' definition of drugs.
[32] Though it was said that girls also do "at least as much" drugs than boys.

Besides drugs, bad company was also said to produce peer pressure to get into stealing. Next, I will have a closer look at this phenomenon, which was considered as one of the main challenges by the boys.

Stealing

One of the major issue that was raised when talking about bad company, and in general about boys' lives in the slum, was stealing. Stealing was considered as one of the defining features of bad company and a negation of "proper" masculinity. Stealing was also said to be done by boys because of *need* such as hunger – still, bad company and bad boys were defined by it.

Many of the boys indeed were exactly in the situation where they said that boys go into stealing; that of unemployment and need, but only one of the boys openly admitted engaging in it. He said however, that he would not steal "directly" (e.g. rob a person), but "indirectly", in a manner that he is not noticed.

Reasons as to why boys in the slum steal in addition to being needy and needing money for drugs were said to be wanting to buy new clothes, not having a parent to look after them, and having to provide for girls/a girlfriend or a child. There were thus also other reasons for boys to steal than that of a direct basic need. As one of the boys explained:

> *"I can say like being a boy and growing up here it's really hard, cause you get the moment like you have seen your friend's new shoes, you also would like that. (...) You get to ask yourself like where do you get the money to buy that shirt or that clothes. (...) So, when it reaches a time that you want to buy those shoes, you know you have to engage yourself in crime, you see? To provide for that girlfriend of yours, if she's like that kind of, one who likes money (...) (T)hat all money you need to get like form crime, and sort of those things."*
>
> (Interviewee 8)

Indeed, as highlighted earlier, it is common in the slum that boys give and lend or give girls (both girlfriends and friends) money or buy them things. (All the boys denied that they would engage in transactional sex, meaning that they would expect sex

from girls in return for giving money to them[33]. Transactional sex was, on the contrary, condemned and said to be something that, again, "rude boys" and "bad girls" do – even when it was acknowledged that it is hard for girls to get a paid job in the slum and that for this reason girls might have to engage in it for example to get money for things such as school fees if the family cannot afford them.) The boys also reported to have patterns of this money giving. One of the boys said that he would not give money to girls unless the girls tell him to what purpose it is for and that he would refuse to give it for things such as cigarettes or *bhang* as he saw these as "waste" of his money. There were also some purposes to which, if the boys have money, they reported not to be able to refuse to give it for:

> *Me: Have some girls come and asked you for money?*
> *Boy: Yes*
> *Me: What have you done?*
> *Boy: Some girls will come to ask me for some money to buy either a book or a pen. If I have, I give them.*
> *Me: Why do you give them?*
> *Boy: Because what they ask me is for books or pens, so I have to give them*
>
> (Interviewee7)

Nevertheless, the boys said that it is very common in the slum that boys engage themselves in crime, such as stealing. Given the context of poverty and unemployment, stealing appeared as a *must* for some. However, there were also said to be other purposes, then that of a need, that boys steal to get money for, such as buying (nice) clothes or to give money to girls and/or girlfriends. It was said that boys who steal can be recognized from idling and that "bad company" (boys who steal) is everywhere in the slum. Even though many of the boys I interviewed fit this description, only one of them admitted doing it. By contrast, many of the boys said that they would never steal. Indeed, most of them probably don't and will not do it, especially for a reason given in the next. In short, stealing was condemned by the boys and thus nothing to be proud of, at least "officially".

[33] On the phenomenon of girls in Kibera slum having to engage in transactional sex with boys and men to receive e.g. sanitary products, see Malmi (2016).

5.3.3 In the ghetto, every boy is a thief – stigmatization

Even though not all the boys steal, they reported that they are all viewed as thieves from the outside, and that people are afraid of them because of where they live:

> *"(U)s, we are known. We are the, something just like, somebody (...) fears you. But you didn't do anything to him. Just fears the area that you're living [in]." [Laughs]*
>
> (Interviewee 4)

This affected the boys to be stigmatized and "dehumanized" in the eyes of the wider society, and it also had a fatal concrete direct consequence, that of being the object of police harassment and brutality. The "dehumanization" of slum boys in the eyes of the wider society probably does not help in gaining wide popular demands to reduce the incidences of excessive force of the police towards these boys either.

Police harassment and brutality

> *"(I)n the ghetto (...) they [police] know every boy is a thief. But not all [are], you see?"*
>
> (Interviewee 3)

Being stigmatized and "dehumanized" as thieves, because they are boys living in a slum, led the boys who were on the streets hustling and idling to experience police harassment. For example, police could come to harass and arrest them when they are working at the matatus:

> *Boy: That's what we do most days [direct people in matatus], and (...) when we are there, a police sometimes comes, arrests us*
> *Me: Why?*
> *Boy: They say we are taking items from people, from passengers, who are passing over there [stealing]*
> *Me: Are you? Do you?*
> *Boy: No, no, no*
> *Me: Do some boys do that?*
> *Boy: They didn't do that*
> *Me: Okay yeah, so for no reason they arrest you?*
> *Boy: [For] (n)o reason, they arrest us*
>
> (Interviewee 2)

In this extract we can see that the boy denies that any boys would steal, even though I was constantly told that many of the boys in the slum steal ("bad company everywhere"). However, police harassment and brutality was recognized by all the boys, most of them telling that they know many boys from the slums who the police have shot dead. In some cases, the boys that had been killed were said to have been completely innocent of any crime, in others they were told to have been engaging in crimes such as stealing. Whatever the cases were, police brutality and their excess use of power is evident.[34]

For some of the boys, especially for the ones who were "idling", everyday life appeared to be about trying to avoid the police, who were constantly harassing them and acting in arbitrary measures:.

> *"You know, to grow up [here] it has been hard. Cause you see even me, let's say I'm not bad, but they don't see it. When the police get in the ghetto, find me staying somewhere, [they] start beat me up. But I'm not [a] thief. But they touch me, cause I've might have [been]"*
>
> (Interviewee 3)

One of the boys was also shot dead by the police around three months after I had left Mukuru. I was told that he had been carrying a fake gun, indicating that he had been engaging in crime, when the police killed him. The boy had told me that his mother had died earlier the same year and that his father is a drunk, who doesn't take care of him. This boy had also had to drop out of school because of school fees after his mother had gotten sick as the family's money had gone to her hospitalization. He was left to idle and work at the matatus. When I asked why he had been killed by the police, in addition to that he was carrying a fake gun, I was told that the police especially targets boys who have dreadlocks ("rastas"). The boy was 17 years old.

Also, when I was still in Nairobi, I was told that in some slums there are hardly any "criminals", meaning boys who steal, anymore and that crime had declined because all the thieves had been killed by the police. In general, I was told that killings in the

[34] It must be noted that the police operate within the given sociopolitical context of the country. A police reform has been implemented in Kenya to tackle the lack of rule of law of the police. However, Osse (2016) argues that this reform has been implemented in an "unwilling context" and is thus unlikely to have a substantial impact on police practice.

slums happen by either family disputes, mob justice or the police. Many of the boys also said that they would not go into stealing *precisely* because it was considered too dangerous because of the dire consequences it can have. However, as said, even though not all the boys engage themselves in crime, such as stealing, they reported to be defined as thieves by the police and the wider society nonetheless. As stealing was also said to happen because of need, as a surviving method in a situation where there is no employment available, it is worth of asking, who the criminal is, someone who tries to survive, or the police that shoots without a trial, or a society that let's this happen, or considers stealing as a crime that justifies *killing*. The everyday police brutality towards the slum boys that goes on in front of the eyes of the wider society clearly indicates that the boys indeed have been "dehumanized" as I was also told that the middle class oftentimes *supports*[35] these killings.

As said, it must be noted that the police operate within the given sociopolitical context of the country and can also be affected by e.g. the socioeconomic conditions of it, as appeared to be the case in Nairobi. Police effectiveness (which the society demands for given Nairobi e.g. being "Nairobbery") appeared to be measured by police "activeness". In order for a police officer thus to remain in his post, he might have to engage in the harassment of which target the slum boys in large extent are as they are socially constructed as (the) thieves. More importantly, being a police officer is not a well-paid employment in Nairobi, they live in crowded dwellings and are not well educated. The clashes (and cooperation) of the police and the marginalized urban youth can thus also be regarded as a "battle of survival" for both. The police in Kenya has indeed been found to contribute to crime, rather than to its prevention or detection[36] (Osse 2016). The ample space for deliberation over mandates and authorities, produced by the relative failure of the police reform (ibid.), combined with the public's demands of the police to enhance their effectiveness, especially in view of rising crime and terrorism, is ominous. The police harassment is indeed not limited to slum boys either. During my stay in Nairobi I for instance met three men who had been either abused or taken to jail by the police from walking on the street. One of

[35] The boys told me that stealing happens also within the slums, but the middle and upper classes are naturally targets as well. Nairobi's notoriousness in thefts has given it the nickname of "Nairobbery".

[36] Since 2011, a police officer has been found to be involved in e.g. 1 out of 7 armed robberies, 2 out of 11 car hijackings, and 1 out of 14 kidnappings in the country (Osse 2016).

them was my fixer (who reported police officers having started to beat him up with batons in front of the gate of his residential estate as he was going home one evening). The other two were young men working for the UN, one from Morocco and the other from Latin America (but who said to constantly having been mistaken as Kenyan Indian). The police had found an excuse to take the latter two to jail, again from the street in the evening after dark. Indeed, the occasion when I felt most unease during my stay in Nairobi was when catching a ride in a police car of an officer who was a friend of my fixer. From him I luckily however only ended up learning that being a common police officer in Nairobi is in no way a rosy life.

5.4 In Sum

Masculinity

The boys expressed to admire and idealize manhood that was represented by features such as being "smart", hardworking, responsible, and in control. They also strongly reinforced the patriarchal ideal of self-sufficient men who can provide for their families, thus framed manhood in terms of breadwinning and providing. This was the kind of manhood and masculinity that they wished to grow up to as adult men. Men and women were seen essentially different, thus men's role as a provider was seen to spring from biology and e.g. religion. Masculinity constructed around being the provider was thus naturalized and universalized.

"Bad company" was seen as the negation of "proper masculinity". Bad company, a condemned form of masculinity among the boys, was said to idle, steal, do drugs and peer pressure into doing the former. However, bad company was also said to be everywhere in the slum, so it also appeared to be a common form of masculinity among the boys in the slum, at least according to the boys. None of the boys claimed themselves to belong into this group, in contrast this was something that they all expressed wanting to "stay out of". This form of masculinity, which can be considered as hypermascular, might however be a more hegemonic form of masculinity, meaning that it was more authorized, that the boys were officially willing to let to be known as, as said, it however appeared to be a common form of masculinity among boys in slums.

Gender equality

The boys supported a view that men and women should be somewhat equal in the ”public realm” such as e.g. in education and land ownership rights. This was expressed by saying that men and women are “both people”. “Olden days” in which women were said not to have been considered as people, were criticized. It was even considered that gender equality has realized itself at this level, as *some* women are doing better than *some* men. In a similar vein, many of the boys viewed that there should not necessarily be a gendered division of wage labor, at least to the extent that it exists.

Even though the boys viewed that men and women should be equal, at least to some extent in the public sphere, men’s authority in the household was not to be contested according to them. Interestingly, and slightly ironically, men “having” to be the “head of the household” was thought to put *men* in an unequal situation in relation to women, because this also meant that they have the responsibility to be the provider. Even though the boys might have recognized, at least to some extent, the “triple burden” of women (as they acknowledged that girls give them “easy time”), men’s work appeared to be valued more, as it was considered that men are in an unequal position in relation to women because of their role as the provider although women work “all the time” (as women’s work include reproductive -, productive - and community managing work (Adeniyi-Ogunyankin 2012)). Men “having” to be the provider was also in contrast to the ideology of romantic heterosexual love upon which they claimed that relationships should be built on while condemning relationships based on money and providing.

Challenges

Life was expressed to be very hard and difficult for boys in the slum. It was said that Mukuru is not a good environment to grow up or to live in, because of challenges such as poverty, unemployment, having nothing to do (which stands in stark contrast to women constantly working because of their triple role, thus triple burden, in the society), peer pressure to do drugs and steal, police harassment and being stigmatized and “dehumanized” in the eyes of the wider society and people from other social classes who don’t live in the slum.

Synthesis

Masculinity, gender relations, and the challenges that the boys face in their everyday life can be seen to be somewhat intertwined. Some patterns include that as providing is seen as boys and men's duty in the prized form of masculinity, the boys needed money to provide for girls. This stood in stark contrast with the ideals of romantic love where money would not play a role in relationship forming. However, the pattern of giving money to girls did not only happen between "boyfriends" and "girlfriends", but also with "sisters" (friends) in the slum. In a situation of poverty and unemployment, the need to acquire money (I'm talking about for other than basic needs here, for example to provide for girls) push some, or perhaps many (I don't know), boys into stealing even if stealing was considered "unmasculine". Some, or many, boys from the slum engaging in stealing makes all the boys living in the slum to be stigmatized and "dehumanized" as thieves by the wider society allowing for the police to harass these boys excessively.

Being out of school and unemployed combined with the gendered division of labor, where it is primarily boys' job to work outside of the household drive boys to "idle" and hassle on the streets which then expose them to the peer pressures of "bad company" and police harassment – and police harassment indeed was a challenge that they boys reported to be living with in the slum, and which has dire consequences of boys being killed by them.

The boys encapsulated the gendered risks of adolescents in the slum quite emptying, saying that girls end up getting pregnant (young and unwantedly) whereas boys end up being killed. At least if the girls end up pregnant from transactional sex, we come a full circle of how masculinity, gender equality and -relations and the gendered risks/challenges faced in the slum are intertwined.

6 DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter, the findings of the empirical research were presented and analyzed. In this chapter, I highlight the main findings and discuss them further with earlier studies as well as with the hypothesis of marginalized urban masculinity-challenged men having to resort to hypermasculinity to assert themselves as masculine.

Also the question of does masculinity matter (and how) will be considered based on this study. I also discuss how this study relates to the theoretical and conceptual framework employed and about the limitations of this study.

6.1 Earlier studies, and hypothesis

Masculinity

Breadwinnerhood, being able to provide for the family, and the attributes related and allowing to gain this position, such as being wise and hard-working, appeared to be the common denominators in the discourses of the adolescent men in Mukuru surrounding "properly masculine" men. This finding is in line with that of Izugbara's (2015a) from other slums in Nairobi among adult men and with that of Silberschmidt (2011) concerning East Africa more broadly. This is by no means surprising as linking masculinity to being the breadwinner is the global norm (Connell 2005a).

Similarly to Izugbara's (2015a) findings among marginalized urban men in Nairobi, the adolescent boys in Mukuru tenaciously thus endorsed breadwinnerhood as the hegemonic form of masculinity even in the face of its unfeasibility. Izugbara (2015a, 53) argued that being a breadwinner, which then qualifies one to be the head of the household and hence to be able to make a claim in masculinity, is sought by any means necessary by poor men in the slums of Nairobi. Poor men in the slums of Nairobi, including Mukuru adolescents, are thus active participants in the global patriarchal discourse that frames manhood in terms of breadwinnerhood and providerhood.

The boys in Mukuru tenaciously endorsed breadwinnerhood as the hegemonic form of masculinity also even if it was considered to produce inequality for *men* (thus not acknowledging the inequality deriving from the triple burden for women[37]). This tells that the boys saw masculinity as universal and natural, which was also the case with men in other slums in Nairobi according to Izugbara (2015a; 2015b). Men's role as the breadwinner was deriving e.g. from biology and religion according to boys in Mukuru. There are thus strong forces against changes in masculinity. However, even

[37] One of the targets of the "Gender Equality" SDG is indeed to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as "nationally appropriate".

though the boys mainly talked about the generalized gender relations to cause men inequality, men enjoy several social and economic privileges by asserting themselves in particular masculine forms (Connell 2011), which was also apparent in Mukuru by boys e.g. telling girls to give them "easy time" at home concerning chores there.

It has been argued that some identities are based on what a person is (existential identity) and others on what a person does (role-based identity) (Kopytoff 1990 according to Silberschmidt 2011). Existentially based identity is composed of features that are thought to be intrinsic, or "immanent" in a cultural definition of what it is to e.g. be male. They are thus non-negotiable. They indicate a state of being rather than of doing, which is difficult to renegotiate, relatively immutable, and surrounded by strong sanctions that punish deviant behavior (ibid., 105). By contrast, features of role-based identity may be negotiated and the identities themselves relinquished with no sanctions (ibid.). In the boys' views on ideal masculine, a man *was* the provider – immanently and intrinsically, this was thus considered as their existential identity. Perhaps making shared responsibility within the household and the family "nationally appropriate" in Kenya would thus require strengthening men's role based identity and attempt to contest the (illusive) existential one.

Hypermasculinity

Izugbara (2015a; 2015b) found very little evidence that all "masculine challenged" men would resort to hypermasculinity to deal with a sense of masculine insufficiency. In the case of adolescent boys in Mukuru it appeared that the boys did not, at least outspokenly, endorse hypermasculinity either and that most of them would not resort to hypermascular behaviors such as stealing to deal with the dilemma that poverty creates for their masculinity that is based on providerhood. The manhood ideals expressed by the boys were in fact opposite of hypermasculinity, as they stressed features such as being "smart", responsible, in control and making wise decisions. However, the sentiment was that boys in the slum do not act in this manner as the boys claimed that there is "bad company" and "rude boys" everywhere in the slum. These boys in turn were defined by the boys by features associated with hypermasculinity, such as crime and drugs. Thus, I found very little evidence that these "masculine challenged" boys would endorse hypermasculine attitudes or behaviors at least *per se*

to assure themselves as *masculine* – quite the opposite, as features that can be described as hypermasculine were mostly expressed as the negation of "true manhood". However, hypermasculine behaviors appeared still largely to be conducted by boys in the slum.

This resonates well with Izugbara's (2015b) finding that breadwinnerhood, the status that marks manliness, was pursued by *any* means possible: by socially sanctioned means as well as strategies that, in their contexts, were considered absolutely unmasculine. Whereas in the case of the adult men Izugbara studied this did not result, at least in notable extents, men to resort to hypermasculine behaviors, in the case of adolescent boys in Mukuru it appeared to do so to some extents as many boys were said to engage in crimes such as stealing. This highlights how a fragile life situation adolescence is.

The boys who steal are thus complying with hypermasculine behavior. However, I would argue that they do it, not necessarily to assure themselves as masculine *per se* – stealing was seen as quite the opposite of it, but either because of pure need, and/or because they are striving for hegemonic masculine ideals such as being able to provide and to look "smart" (to get money to have nice clothes for instance). However, as peer pressure coming from bad company was referred over and over again as an issue for boys in the slum, indeed among the boys hypermasculinity might be a more hegemonic form of masculinity, meaning that it was more authorized, that they were willing to let me know. For example, peer pressure to do drugs, also apparent in how boys who don't do them were being "dissed" as they were told to know "nothing" if they don't try them, would indicate that within some circle of boys in the slum to try drugs was a measure of being "smart", thus indeed *masculine*.

The matatu industry, in which many of the boys are involved in daily, can also be considered to embody hypermasculinity with its imagery of "gangsta rappers", dangerous driving and its legacy of being linked with gangs. It can thus be seen to enforce hypermascular "habitus". However, I would find it too simplistic to conform to

that "gangsta rap made me do it"[38]. The matatu culture indeed both embodies Nairobi's social problems but also bright promises of its future (Mutongi 2017[39]). As said, the matatus represent the urban youth culture of Nairobi, and it is also being used to combat negative stereotypes (The New York Times 2018). It thus represents a kind of democracy and equality as it is an arena for the youth to express themselves, and as for a "generation matatu"[40] social or economic class has seemed to be less important than knowing the latest hip-hop hits, or wearing the right kinds of clothes (Mutongi 2017). This "showoff" culture can also however drive hypermascular behavior, as stated.

However, most of the boys I talked to expressed a feeling of being stigmatized as hypermascular because they live in a slum. Similarly that they themselves contested and stigmatized their peer group, boys in the slum, as "bad" and "rude", they bore and were troubled by the same stigmatization on themselves from the outside society. This phenomenon of discrimination within discrimination has been detected among impoverished communities of black youth in the United States as well (Hochschild 2010). In that context it was found that the combination of the "moral panic" prevailing around the apparent fecklessness and dangerousness of young blacks and social structures that shape and constrain individual agency has resulted in unfair and unequal institutions, lack of decent jobs, failure of the educational system, excessive incarceration of young blacks, and poverty (ibid.). These issues combined with increasingly neoliberal policies have produced a situation for many black youths where the "structural environment both limits their power to make real choices (..) and imposes high costs on their lives" (Cohen 2010, 17) of which one consequence is the heightened policing and criminalization of those believed to be the cause of the problem (ibid.). Sounds familiar?

Nevertheless, if the boys are ready to engage even in practices claimed unmasculine, such as stealing (even though, similarly than with the case of drugs, there is a reason

[38] "Gangsta Rap Made Me Do It" is an American rapper Ice Cube's song that comments ironically the exploitation of gangsta rap as a scapegoat for society's problems.
[39] Mutongi (2017) offers a richly interdisciplinary history of the matatu culture of Nairobi up to present.
[40] "Generation matatu" refers to a generation of young, educated men and women who grew up as Kenya's neoliberal economic policies developed, and who were unable to find employment other than in the growing matatu industry (Mutongi 2017).

to suspect that it is in fact considered masculine in certain circles of boys in the slum), to become a provider proofs how overwhelmingly masculinity is tied to it. This is the case in Eastern Africa more generally as well. Silberschmidt (2011) has arguably rightly claimed that the centrality of men's income-earning power in constructions of masculinity cannot indeed be emphasized enough there. All the other features of "properly masculine" men, such as "not staling" seem thus to kick the beam to providerhood. Providerhood in turn, is part of the parcel of gender relations (the pattern of providing being gendered) in which gender inequality is structured in.

Do masculinities matter?

In the case of Mukuru slum boys, it became clear to me, that these boys were primarily interested in socio-economic change and access to income-generating activities rather than in gender equality. Surely, the boys also suffered from masculinity norms – which made them vulnerable for example if engaging in crime to comply with the providerhood model (and even if they personally didn't, they were vulnerable because of the stigmatization that as slum boys they would).

However, if we acknowledge that poverty and lack of socio-economic development are obstacles to gender equality, and that the status of men and women tend to go together, as Silberschmidt suggests (2011), perhaps a more fruitful way to address gender inequality in the contexts of poverty is by addressing the structural basis of gender inequalities than by changing cultural or social norms that guide boys and men's behavior, as Cornwall et al. (2011) also suggest. Likewise, this makes sense in the case of Mukuru boys, as it was not that the boys would have not valued e.g. education, being responsible and work, quite contrary as they were craving for them, but they were lacking in opportunities to fulfil *these* norms.

Masculinities do matter, and at every level of the "hierarchy of masculinities" – but which of them matter more? What I mean is that addressing and stabilizing the "economic base", which is ultimately needed to fight poverty and gender inequality with that, is affected by policies and programs of economic and political elites. The gender agenda should thus be shifted back to a concern with the fundamental structural inequities that make the world unfair and unequal. Power is a structural relation that is in itself gendered, men being privileged in the worlds of politics and the economy.

This observation brings also forward another, in my opinion, important question of what can, or should, be considered as "hypermasculinity", or perhaps rather, what kind of masculinity should be problematized. The masculinities that allow for the structural inequities that continue to persist, also presented in the dominant market led model of development, need not to go unnoticed or un-criticized. Thus, I unite with the call of Cornwall et. al (2011) and others (e.g. Silberschmidt 2011) that masculinities must be politicized in order for real and fundamental difference to occur.

The call of the Mukuru boys themselves too is to get more opportunities, and to get them emergently as it is at the core of their survival, as the heartbreaking plea in the following exchange of words suggests:

> *Me: Do you wanna ask me something?*
> *Boy: Yes.*
> *Me: Go ahead*
> *Boy: What will you do to prevent our boys from dying and ending up in drugs in jail?*
> *Me: Can you tell me what could I do?*
> *Boy: What actions do you take for example?*
> *Me: No, can you tell me what I can do, because I don't know.*
> *Boy: Now I don't know the answer*
> *Me: What do you think that should be done?*
> *Boy: Is that our boys to get more educated and more works to be provided*
> *Me: [I explain that I can try to influence politics in my home country and that at least I can try to raise awareness of the hardship of the boys for example by writing this thesis, but that I don't know a quick remedy]*
> *Boy: We will be thankful. I know it will take time, but the more time that it will take [for things to change] the more boys, the number of the boys losing their chances will increase*
>
> (Interviewee 10)

6.2 Theoretical contemplations

Surely, the boys did not construct their masculinity in a vacuum, but embedded in the larger societal context in which they live in. Peer group seemed to be especially central for the boys, as they are the "significant others" as is common among adolescents everywhere. Behavior is also conditioned by contexts, which i.e. affects the general-

ized attitudes and perspectives that then get to be internalized and/or reflected and reacted upon. All the boys for example reflected upon crime and drug abuse, whether they were engaged in them, or not, and claimed that their group of "significant others", boys of the slum, are "bad boys". In this sense there was a double standard of criticizing people outside of the slum who stigmatize them, but also taking part in the same stigmatization – the social construction of slum boys as thieves.

Post-colonial perspectives

Race: There is no question of what race are the boys that the police in Kenya targets. The police assassinating black males is also a phenomenon not limited to Kenya. However, in the case of Kenya, the targeting of the police is based rather on class than race, meaning that boys from the slum are stigmatized and under the police's radar.

Heterogeneity and agency: Masculinity is a product of ongoing engagement with emergent social circumstances and reality (Izugbara 2015b). However, even if these boys lived in the same circumstances and reality, they did not end up "being" all the same, or doing all the same. The leeway for the boys to cope in the context of poverty appeared to be tight, and tighter for some than others, depending for example on the support networks of the boy. Still, not all of them resorted to engage in hypermascular behaviors such as crimes for example. The agency of the boys was well visible and expressed in their own reflections as well.

However, they were "othered" by the wider society and the upper and middle classes that appeared to homogenize and stigmatize all boys from the slum as thieves, which then makes the society to allow for the police's excessive use of power against them.

Gender: Gender appeared to be quite a foundational category in the context of Mukuru as for example the risks and challenges that adolescents face there are highly gendered. However, as I have argued above, in the contexts of poverty, I am not sure whether priority should be given to gender in front of other structures of subordination, such as class in this case. While men are the beneficiaries where gender inequities exist, not all men benefit to the same degree, and some men do not benefit at all,

but are rather vulnerable, as the boys in Mukuru. Thus, if inequalities between genders work to the disadvantage of both genders, and the status of men and women tend to go together, as Silberschmidt (2011) suggests, then what is ultimate needed to fight gender inequality is, indeed, to address class and poverty.

"(The) tradition/al" as constitutive of masculinity: These marginalized boys used tradition/al as a constitutive of their masculinity, claiming for example that the gendered division of labor at home (men being the head) is an "African thing"[41]. Tradition was also used by their parents for example by telling them they won't be buried "home" if they don't get married. They also however distanced themselves from tradition saying for example that their tribe cultures don't matter to them and by highly criticizing "the olden days" when women were claimed not to have been considered as people. The boys thus constructed "tradition" along with masculinity, which in this case served both as legitimation of gendered practices and as well as an object of critique.

Globalization

My findings support Connell's views on how masculinities reconstruct in relation to the substructures of gender relations when affected by globalization. In the symbolic relations, as said, the boys took actively part in the global patriarchal discourse that frames manhood in terms of breadwinnerhood and providerhood. The boys were also constantly exposed to Western rap, pop and sport culture. I would argue that the boys had especially internalized some conventions of the black American rap/hip-hop culture enforced by the matatu culture and facilitated by a common language (English). This was apparent for instance in the employment of the word "ghetto" to refer to their neighborhood[42] – a word central in American rap culture. When looking through the power relations, they also endorsed women's presence in the public realm and criticized a time when women would have not been considered as people. In line with endorsing women's presence in the public realm, they were also for their inclusion into wage employment. This nevertheless didn't undermine their construction of masculinity around the role of being the breadwinner, as it was naturalized

[41] The accurateness of this claim is of course debatable as the gender relations of African societies were disrupted and altered by colonialism.
[42] Other term used was for instance "village", which has a very different, non-"street", cling to it.

and universalized. Understandings of power thus seemed to be differentiated in public and private spheres, as women were both endorsed to be included in the public sphere, but being the breadwinner gives a position of being the head in an intra-household arena of power. Further, this was endorsed even though the globalized ideology of romantic (heterosexual) love, in which money (and thus providing) would not play a role in relationship forming, was definitely exalted by the boys. The model of romantic love where money wouldn't "matter" was thus strategically adopted or distanced, in other words, the boys engaged in "code switching" between the global and local variants of emotional relations.

Thus, to sum up, there are similarities across countries in the ways in which socialization occurs through education, the media, family, and peer group and so on – how adolescents internalize generalized attitudes and behaviors or reject them, although the manifestation of masculinities may vary according to contexts. In today's world, most context are however influenced by globalization, which in turn is driven by a specific "transnational business masculinity" at its wheel. Thus, the pursuit to "change" local masculinities that reconstruct under globalization, should first seriously consider what is the masculinity associated with those who control the dominant institutions of the world economy, and thus, indeed, globalization. The masculinity that is in a hegemonic position in the world gender order has an impact to local realities through the kind of global processes it advances, and do these processes, which in themselves are biased, advance equality (in terms of all, class, race, gender etc.) is, in my view, a question of primary importance.

6.3 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are plentiful. Said differently, this study only offers a glimpse and a scratch of the construction of masculinities and challenges among Mukuru adolescent boys. The most serious limitations are based on methodology that also restrained the scope of the research.

One important factor embedded in the construction of gender and masculinity, as bodily reflexive practice, sexuality, was hardly discussed with the boys. I considered

this too a sensitive topic, albeit present in the everyday life of all adolescents, to be brought up. Thus, the first limitation of the study is it being completely heteronormative. Also, the claim on undermining of men's income-earning powers leading masculinity to become especially closely associated with sexuality, potency, fertility and male honor (Silberschmidt 2011) – the (hyper)sexual aspects of "hypermasculinity", were not explored in this study.

Surely, my subjectivity as a woman obstructed me to bring up sexuality in the discussions with these adolescent boys, especially in the form of a concern of making them feel uncomfortable, as I did indeed have some vague attempts to direct the discussion to this theme. However, even if some boys were willing to talk about it on a general level of what "girls" and "boys" in the slum do, they did not indicate a tendency to wanting to open up about it personally. Perhaps as a man I would have been in a position of more of an "insider" with the boys and hence felt comfortable to urge this theme as I would think that I would have done more as a woman had I been interviewing girls. However, apart from this topic, I did not feel as if my subjectivity as a woman restricted our conversations, and also felt that the boys wanted to make connections to me, and to make me feel like somewhat an "insider". At least they used the idiom "you know" extensively with me.

Being a woman did not only limit the topics of the discussion as outlined above, but it also limited the methods that I found feasible for the data collection. Before going to the "field" I had had in mind to conduct some ethnographic observations in "public spaces" in the slum. I put public spaces in quotations marks as Mukuru was so dense I almost constantly felt as being in peoples' homes when I there. However, almost immediately it became clear to me that I would not feel comfortable to execute this plan as I indeed was at the center of attention when I entered the slum. Looking back, it feels like quite a naïve thought that I could have entered those premises as an "observer" as my presence had such big impact on people around me. However, as a man, although I'm not sure if this would be the case for a white man either, I could have felt more at ease to bond and make friendship with the boys to the extent that I could have "hang around" with them more. However, I must notice that as these boys mainly only shared the official narratives (as discussed below) of the state of affairs,

I have some doubts that they would have allowed a researcher of any kind to follow them around and to see all that they are up to in their empty days.

Further, by using interviewing as a method I was mostly only offered "official" narratives, the *ideals* of being, behaving and doing, which in many instances contradicted reality. By using e.g. ethnography or photo elicitation, a more realistic view of the boys' world could have been captured. However, I was very aware of hearing only or mostly "official" statements, and have stated my research question in a manner and used methods that allow for the "facts" offered by the boys not to be treated as such. Also, I find the gap between the reality and the ideals expressed fruitful as it highlights the structural roots of inequality, such as poverty and lack of opportunities. Making the boys aware of the disparity between ideals expressed and real-life experiences might also be used in bringing some of the *doxes*, such as men only being able to be the head of households, under question, when reality proofs them wrong.

The study is also limited by its focus only being in what the boys expressed, and neglecting, other than from what was grasped from the boys' talk, the influence of their surroundings on them. It would be interesting for example to study the adolescent girls' perceptions on masculinity (as well as on femininity in fact), the church's role and so on. Using ethnography or photo elicitation as a method would have possibly better captured the influences coming from the boys' surrounding as well.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this thesis was to provide insights of adolescent men living in Mukuru explicitly as gendered beings by exploring their perceptions on masculinity and gender relations as well as the challenges and issues that they articulated to face in their everyday lives when trying to comply with those in the context of poverty. Based on this aim, the study attempted to test a hypothesis of marginalized "masculinity-challenged" males resorting to hypermasculinity by giving insights to the following research questions:

> *Do marginalized urban adolescent men endorse attitudes and beliefs and/or do they restore to actions that can be considered hypermasculine to assert themselves as masculine?*

- *What are the boys' perceptions on "proper" masculinity?*
- *What are the boys' perceptions on gender equality?*
- *What kind of challenges and issues do the boys encounter in their everyday lives when trying to comply with the above in the context of poverty, and when challenging their way out of poverty?*

Eight individual interviews and one group interview of two boys were conducted in the empirical part of the study. Altogether 10 boys between the ages of 15 and 19 were thus interviewed. The interview transcripts were then coded for analysis. The major conclusions deriving from the findings of this study are:

- The boys in Mukuru slum universalized and naturalized masculinity built on providing and breadwinning. Being the provider was thus considered as an existential identity of men, which is non-negotiable. It was also considered to give men the position as the "head of the household".

- The boys somewhat supported gender equality in the "public" realm, but men's authority in the household as the "head" was not to be contested according to the boys. Men "having" to be the "head of the household" was also thought to produce gender based inequality for *men*, thus not acknowledging the inequality deriving from the triple burden of women.

- Hypermascular attitudes, beliefs and actions were defined as the negation of "proper" masculinity in the official narratives. However, this kind of masculinity was claimed to be the most common one among boys in the slum.

- Adolescents did appear to be more prone to resort to stealing (which can be considered as hypermascular behavior) than adult men in the slums of Nairobi. This was said to be due to peer pressure and thus highlights how a fragile life situation adolescence is.

- The boys who steal are complying with hypermasculine behavior. However, this is not necessarily done to assure oneself as masculine *per se*, but either because of pure need, and/or because they are striving for hegemonic mascu-

line ideals such as being able to provide for girls and to dress "smart". Hypermasculinity might however be a more hegemonic form of masculinity among the boys in the slum than the boys were willing to admit.

- The matatu industry, in which many of boys are involved in, can also be considered to embody hypermasculinity. It can thus be seen to enforce hypermascular "habitus". However, the matatus which represent the urban youth culture of Nairobi are also being used to combat negative stereotypes. The "showoff" culture tied to it can however also be a driver for hypermasculinity.

- The boys felt stigmatized, criticized and dehumanized by people from outside of the slum, but they also took part in the same stigmatization – the social construction of slum boys as thieves.

- The social construction of slum boys as thieves appeared to allow the police to use arbitrary and excessive use of power and violence against them. The boys indeed expressed police harassment to be one of the major challenges that they face in the slum.

- The ample space for deliberation over mandates and authorities, produced by the relative failure of the Kenyan police reform, combined with the public's demands of the police to enhance their effectiveness is ominous, and should be addressed.

My material strongly supports the view that boys (and men) should be included in considerations and pursuits to advance gender equality. However, similarly as girls and women need better opportunities at many places, boys and men living in poverty also need opportunities. The easy way forward in GAD in addressing men has been to consider the problematics of masculinities and argue that they matter. The transformation that is primarily needed to bring about the opportunities needed by both genders however (and to prevent circumstances where "hypermasculinity" can become a hegemonic form of masculinity to form for that matter), the stabilization of the economy, is a much bigger and more difficult issue and something that would also bring the masculinities at the top of the hierarchy of masculinities into question and scrutiny.

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